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FABULOUS FRENCHTOWN

THE STORY OF THE FAMOUS
FRENCH QUARTER OF NEW ORLEANS

By

ERNEST G. VETTER

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To John

FOREWORD

This book is the result of a more or less orderly search for interesting historical data about the French Quarter of New Orleans. Started many years ago, this pursuit was solely for my personal enjoyment and I had no intention of writing a book about it. My little uncoverings were so fascinating, however, that I want to pass them along for others to share. In preparing "Fabulous Frenchtown" I was enabled to not only re-enjoy the fruits of my seeking but also thereby, I hope, to provide greater enjoyment to those who visit New Orleans. Further, it is a fond wish that others who have not done so, might be enticed, through acquaintance with this book, to go there. This is essentially a guide book, but it is not of the standard variety. The first part outlines the history of the Old City with emphasis on its colorful and dramatic events: the second part is a place by place, street by street, stroll past the scenes of these happenings.

As others did before me, I found that there is no city like New Orleans. And, when I say "New Orleans," I mean the French Quarter. For me, Frenchtown *is* New Orleans. The modern city of New Orleans is just that—a modern city. It is a grand city—a little different from other large American cities, perhaps, as San Francisco differs from Chicago, Philadelphia from New York—but still a modern city.

But Frenchtown! Ah, Frenchtown! That is different. If the superlative and dramatic appear overworked here, it is simply

because everything seems that way in New Orleans. It is a city of extremes, whether in its sins or its sanctities. No community anywhere has had so much of passion and piety, squalor and charm, love and intrigue, so concentrated into two and a half centuries.

And yet, the very abundance of material has been a pitfall. The problem has been not what to include but rather what to leave out. Generally, I have written about that which pleased me; but, I have tried to include something that might whet the appetite of everyone. To the initiate, it will be clear that there is much that has been covered before and better, but there also appear some fresh items uncovered in old records and newspapers, long stored in dark and dusty archives.

Despite careful scrutiny into authoritative sources some errors have undoubtedly slipped in. These I deplore. But, in the words of Harold Sinclair, who has written a far better book, "The Port of New Orleans," I hope the reader will have as much fun finding them as I had making them. As it is not intended to be a scholarly reference work, it is more important that it fulfills its real purpose, which is to entertain.

It is impossible to list all who were so helpful in answering questions, providing information, and locating material, but they have my sincere appreciation nevertheless. I must thank publicly, however, Dr. A.A. Silverman, owner of the Southern Book Mart, for his exceptional kindness, and Ray M. Thompson for his friendly help. The illustrations are largely the work of several top photographers. Dan S. Leyrer provided the shots of old landmarks no longer existing, besides doing special assignments upon request. A great many came from Roy C. Meates, some from the New Orleans *Item*, a few from the collection of the late celebrated Frances Benjamin Johnston, now in the Library of Congress, and last—and least— some from a second-rate, amateur shutter-pusher, the author. The Louisiana State Museum gave kind permission to photograph paintings and other objects there and to use material from their publications.

Well, believe me, it has been fun. I do hope a little of it has been passed on.

E.G.V

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FABULOUS FRENCHTOWN

1

THE FRENCH QUARTER

The French Quarter is not, and never was, the Red Light District of New Orleans. It never was an area set aside for the primary purpose of dispensing sex together with the related services and vices that accompany and complement the vending of passion. True, there was such a section known as Storyville, for which New Orleans gained a certain measure of fame, but Storyville merely adjoined the French Quarter—it never was a part of Frenchtown.

It is also true that while the French Quarter never was a segregated or legalized vice section it did have at different times in its existence, areas so low and degenerate that they have never been equalled for lewdness and depravity. As a matter of fact, the sinkholes of Frenchtown were so vicious and rotten that the restricted area seemed tame and law-abiding by comparison. But, these cesspools were a product of the times; they came, ran their course, and died out, leaving the French Quarter no better and no worse than any other community where people live, love and expire. No, the French Quarter is no better than any other place—nor is it any worse—but most assuredly it is different.

Frenchtown is a city within a city. It is the old City of New Orleans, existing today with relatively little change as it was originally laid out by its French founders well over two hundred years ago. It covers an area of about a mile long by a half mile wide in the form of a rectangle almost exactly

in the geographic center of the modern city of New Orleans. The Old City has seven streets running longitudinally and fifteen streets crossing them. The boundaries are the world-famous Canal Street on the west, Rampart Street on the north, and the Esplanade on the east, as well as you can delineate direction in New Orleans. The Mississippi River forms the fourth boundary, flowing due north, past the Old City. Yes, north as it follows a circuitous path to turn south again further on. Here the early settlers observed the peculiar phenomenon of the sun rising over the west bank of the Mississippi—the only spot in its entire length where this is possible.

The new and modern city of New Orleans, a great metropolis and the second largest seaport in the United States, has grown up around the older city, trying with all its might and power to absorb and assimilate Frenchtown without success or hope of doing so. The old and mellow competes with the new and callow, perpetuating that spirit of turmoil and conflict that has been inherent in their history since their mutual birth. No community in the United States, perhaps none in the entire world for the time of its existence, has had such a colorful and composite past as Frenchtown, such a terrible yet wonderful history. Here the recording researcher is overwhelmed in the wealth of fascinating lore, legend, and tradition that greets his inquiry.

Despite its name, the French Quarter is not French at all. If one were to attempt to identify the Old City with a foreign strain it might more properly be known as the Spanish Quarter, because of the predominance of Spanish-type architecture within its limits. The French Quarter was conceived, founded, and nurtured by the French, but it had been under several other social and political influences before it finally came under the flag of the United States. The Old City has had a rough time, and its existence today is ample proof of its hardiness and will to survive. Disease, famine, economic collapse, war, and fire have all taken their horrible toll. In its early life Frenchtown had two devastating fires that practically wiped it out and, would have finished a less hardy community. Had it been highly bred and delicate, instead of robust and indestructible from the strengthening influences of a mongrel

heritage, it would certainly have been irreparably destroyed. But, as the phoenix of legend rose from its own ashes, twice did New Orleans demonstrate this phenomenon—to emerge each time in renewed and replenished substance and splendor. Since it was under the banner of Castile and León at the time, all new construction had to conform with the building requirements of Spain, and the architecture that the Moors imported into Iberia in the seventh and eighth centuries found itself appearing in New Orleans. Thus, while honoring its French founding in its sobriquet, the French Quarter is actually more Spanish in appearance today, except for an occasional modern structure that took inadvertent root within.

Not long ago, progress—in the form of filling stations and parking lots—began to encroach upon the French Quarter and threatened to eliminate for all time the priceless historical landmarks of the older city. A group of enlightened citizens, realizing the immeasurable loss to posterity and prosperity if this rich historical spot were permitted to be assimilated or destroyed, petitioned the Mayor for support in attempting to preserve the Old City in its original condition. The civic officials, recognizing the cultural contribution that the French Quarter makes to New Orleans and also alert to its inestimable value as a tourist attraction, which draws a steady flow of dollars to the city, enacted laws to guard against the change, mutilation, or destruction of the time-tempered buildings. To this farsighted and practical attitude can we be grateful that we are privileged to tread on this hallowed ground today and to be temporarily transported backward into a glorious segment of our romantic American past.

For a keener savoring of what the venerable old city has to offer it will be amply rewarding to peer briefly back at earlier times to recall some of the more salient historical highlights that have left their record in the mores of the district.

2

EARLY SETTLEMENT

Although other explorers had discovered the river many years earlier, the vital history of the lower Mississippi Valley began on April 6, 1682, when Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle, ended his long descent to the Gulf. Before a cross, erected with appropriate ceremony, he claimed for France "all the land drained by the river and its tributaries," naming the whole territory "Louisiana" in honor of his king, Louis XIV. Nothing was done to develop this rich region, however, until 1698, when an expedition headed by Pierre Le Moyne, Sieur d'Iberville, was sent out from France to colonize the territory and to forestall the activity and interest that England and Spain were showing in that region. Accompanying Iberville was his brother, Jean Baptiste Le Moyne, Sieur de Bienville, who was destined to become the dominant figure in the early history of Louisiana and New Orleans. Arriving at the mouth of the Mississippi in March 1699, they ascended the river to above what is now Baton Rouge.

After a brief survey of the new territory a settlement was started, and the capital was established near the present city of Biloxi, on the Gulf of Mexico. Elaborate plans were prepared for exploring and developing the territory, but misfortune plagued the colonists from the very first, and progress was discouragingly slow. Iberville contracted a fever, and after a period of illness he returned home to recuperate. He died before he could return. Financial difficulties in the mother

country multiplied and were reflected in the colony. To obtain funds to continue his sumptuous court, the King, in return for a large financial consideration, turned the colony over for development to Antoine Crozat, a wealthy merchant. Bienville had been appointed Acting Governor following his brother's death, but Crozat's authority superseded that of the Governor. Concerned more with quick profits from gold and silver mines and pearl beds that proved to be non-existent than in long-term colonization, the land agent was in continual disagreement with Bienville. The Governor, a man of vision, advocated sound colonization and fought against quick exploitation of the territory.

Bienville recognizing the tremendous potentialities of the Mississippi Valley, had long recommended establishing a settlement on the Mississippi and removing the capital from Biloxi to some good location on the river. He felt that the future of the territory depended not upon speculative search for mineral resources that had given no evidence of their existence but in the development of agriculture and commerce. He knew that control of the river meant control of the valley. But powerful political factions opposed Bienville and his proposals and, being without authority, he could not act. Furthermore, his persistence and negotiations with his principals and the King met with repeated rebuff. Conditions continued to grow worse until Crozat finally became so dissatisfied that he asked the King to release him from his pact. In this air of distrust and conflict the colony could not prosper.

The French government next decided to entrust the work of colonization to a syndicate, through which greater financial resources would become available. A company was formed called the "Mississippi Company, or Company of the West," headed by John Law, a grand-scale adventurer and one of the most colorful characters in history. Bienville was retained, but again he was disregarded and relegated to a position of minor importance. Under Law there occurred a promotion on a level of lavishness and imagination that makes present-day business Titans drool. He put on a glowing and highly effective sales campaign in France to attract settlers. Gathering together a horde of hopeful settlers, he came to Louisiana and

took over the colony like a conquerer. Far in advance of his time, he effected a method of inflation financing which temporarily brought what appeared to be prosperity to the colony. But the settlers were oversold, and the promised land did not come up to either claim or expectation. Both the parent country and the colony became submerged under a flood of paper currency that steadily declined in value. It was not long before the "Mississippi Bubble," as it came to be known, reached the bursting point, and Law, bankrupt, threw up his hands and returned to France. Hopes and prospects for the colony declined to the vanishing point.

Upon Law's departure, Bienville, who had never wavered in his confidence in the future of Louisiana, immediately set about making a new start. Law, back in France, acknowledging his own failure but fair enough to recognize Bienville's loyalty and ability, recommended that he be reappointed Governor. Louis XIV had died, and Bienville, feeling that the new ruler might be open to conviction, continued to agitate for the transfer of the capital to the Mississippi. Upon receiving word from the King of his reappointment as Governor, Bienville displayed the character that later won him, after a lifetime of strife and frustration, the distinction of being known as the "Father of Louisiana." Against the advice of his counsellors, and without waiting for approval from the King, Bienville took a group of fifty men to the river and set them to work clearing a place that had been pointed out to him by the Indians on his first exploration trip up the Mississippi with his brother, d'Iberville, in 1699. Bienville had long ago decided to build a great city there, as he wrote in his reports, on "a ridge of high land about thirty leagues from the mouth of the Mississippi, lying between the river and Lake Pontchartrain, with easy portage and bayou communication between the two." Undoubtedly to honor, but possibly to assuage for his bold action in the apparent assumption of royal prerogative, Bienville named the new settlement "Nouvelle Orléans," after the Duke of Orleans, then Regent of France.

Thus, in 1718, twenty years after Iberville and Bienville arrived in Louisiana, New Orleans was born in turmoil and in conflict. She has known little else since.

The corner of St. Louis and Royal Streets in the French Quarter showing typical Pinchback ironwork and a famous shrine of New Orleans. Arensberg.

aSalle takes possession of all lands drained Mississippi naming territory Louisiana.

Modern banks of New Orleans contrast with cast iron balconies of early Frenchtown.

The founding of New Orleans. Governor Bienville showing Adrien de Pauger where to locate the Place d'Armes, the church, and the streets of the new city.

LeBlond de la Tour, Chief Engineer for the Crown, had repeatedly opposed Bienville's plans for the new settlement as being impractical and had refused to have anything to do with them. But not Adrien de Pauger. An assistant engineer, de Pauger had full confidence in Bienville's judgment, and with the Governor's help he laid out what is believed to be the first planned city in the United States. Fearless and a man of action, like his leader, he was not content to see the new city grow up along cowpaths, Indian trails, or natural byways as has been the destiny of most of our communities. On the location selected by Bienville, a hundred and ten miles from the Gulf (a fact not generally realized), and where the river bends to form a crescent, he laid out a rectangle 4,000 feet in length and 1,800 feet wide. Streets of perfect alignment divided the parallelogram into 66 city blocks of 300 feet each which were further subdivided into lots having a street frontage of 60 feet and a depth of 120 to 150 feet. When the land was cleared and the streets laid the plot looked somewhat like a large square. From this, in later years, the section became known to the French-speaking population as the "Vieux Carré," or Old Square, a name that is used reverently today. Because of its location on a curve of the river the old quarter became known also as the "Crescent City," the most popular of many terms now applied to the modern city.

In the center of the town, fronting on the river, Bienville reserved an entire square for a parade ground, or "Place d'Armes." Now called "Jackson Square," in honor of the leader of the American forces in the last battle of the War of 1812, it has recurringly been the scene of intensely dramatic historical events. Directly behind the Place d'Armes, in the square that was to become the nerve-center of the colony, sites were laid out for a church, market place, barracks, government house and a jail. All efforts were then concentrated on building up the city, and under the drive and leadership of the Governor great progress was made. Impressed by the reports of advancements being made in New Orleans, the Regent and his counsellors were more inclined to look favorably upon Bienville's continued petitions for approval to shift the capital to that settlement. In 1722 three commissioners were sent to

New Orleans by the Regent with authority to approve the transfer if they found it advisable. Bienville was successful in convincing the representatives of the Crown of the expediency of the move, and the permission was granted. His great dream had come true. New Orleans thereby became the capital of a territory nearly four times larger than the mother country. The colony began to grow and prosper.

But, as has been well stated, man does not live by bread alone, and Bienville had problems other than administrative. He was forced to entreat his King: "Send me wives for my colonists, they are running in the woods after Indian girls." The priests, being practical and realistic, also wrote: "Let us sanction with religion marriage with Indian girls, or send wives of their own kind to the young men." These requests were looked upon as reasonable, and quick action was taken. In 1727 six Ursuline nuns were sent over to nurse the sick, teach the young children of the colony, and to prepare shelter for the young ladies who were to come shortly afterwards as prospective wives for the colonists. Construction was immediately started on a convent for the nuns. This was completed a few years later, and it still stands at the corner of Chartres and Ursulines Streets.

In the following year the first shipload of young girls arrived. These girls were called "filles à la cassette," or casket girls, from the little chests in which they carried their articles of clothing. Carefully chosen from good middle-class families for their high character and housewifely skill, they were eagerly sought as wives by the heart-hungry pioneers. During the day the men were permitted to visit the girls under the vigilant orbs of the Ursulines, but at night the young ladies were locked up in the rooms of the convent and guarded by soldiers. When a man found a girl he liked he asked for her hand in marriage. The girls had the privilege of making a choice or refusing any offer but the suitor himself had to have the approval of the watchful Sisters. The casket girls continued to arrive at regular intervals until 1751, entering the colony through the Place d'Armes. Because of the forethought shown in their selection, they were an excellent influence in the character of the community. Many among the aristocracy of present-day New

Orleans—some of whom still live in the French Quarter—can trace their ancestry back to these "casket girls."

In addition to their interests in the Mississippi region, the French were also developing the St. Lawrence section to the north. La Salle's claim of "the lands drained by the Mississippi and its tributaries" was continuous to the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence region, giving France claim over a vast amount of land. The English meanwhile were establishing strong colonies in Virginia and Carolina, claiming that their territory extended entirely across the continent, or as they put it, "from sea to sea." As long as the French confined their activity to the Gulf and the St. Lawrence Valley, and the English remained east of the Appalachian Mountains, there was no cause for friction. By 1750, however, the western limits of the British occupation and the eastern borders of the French were drawing closer together, and disputes began to break out over boundaries.

Rivalry soon became so intense that the Governor of Virginia sent a young Major of Militia named George Washington to protest to the French against encroachment upon the English claims. Hostilities broke out and this fighting in the American wilderness spread to Europe, involving not only England and France but also Russia, Spain, Austria, Prussia, Sweden, the West Indies, and India in a prolonged conflict. That part of the struggle that took place in this country is known as the French and Indian War; that in Europe as the Seven Years' War.

Peace finally came in 1763, terminating in the Treaty of Paris, which had a profound and far-reaching effect on New Orleans. An extremely complex document, its ultimate result was to displace France completely from the mainland of the North American continent. All territory east of the Mississippi, with the exception of the "Island of New Orleans" (a strip of land between the Mississippi, Bayou Manchac, and the Lakes) was awarded to England, and the territory west of the Mississippi, plus New Orleans went to Spain. The transfer of Louisiana to Spain was kept secret from the colonists, but rumors leaked to them, causing dismay and unrest. When these rumors were verified, they touched off a series of events so bizarre and so incongruous that they could hardly be believed if they were not fully documented.

A year and a half passed before Captain Charles Philippe Aubry, the Acting Governor, received official notice of the transfer to Spain. The news, which until that time had been mere conjecture, filled the inhabitants with resentment and apprehension. Faced not only with the prospect of changing laws, language, and customs with the change of ensign, they recalled reports of cruelty from the nearby Spanish provinces of Florida and Mexico. Stories of torture and horror were exchanged in hushed voices when people met. The settlers were torn between loyalty and fear and felt they should do something, but they did not know what. Nicolas Chauvin de Lafrénière, the Attorney General and a speaker of fiery eloquence, organized a movement to petition Louis XV not to release Louisiana to Spain. A delegation of three citizens. headed by Jean Milhet, a wealthy New Orleans merchant, was appointed to go to Paris to plead with the King. Milhet and his two associates set out with high hopes for success.

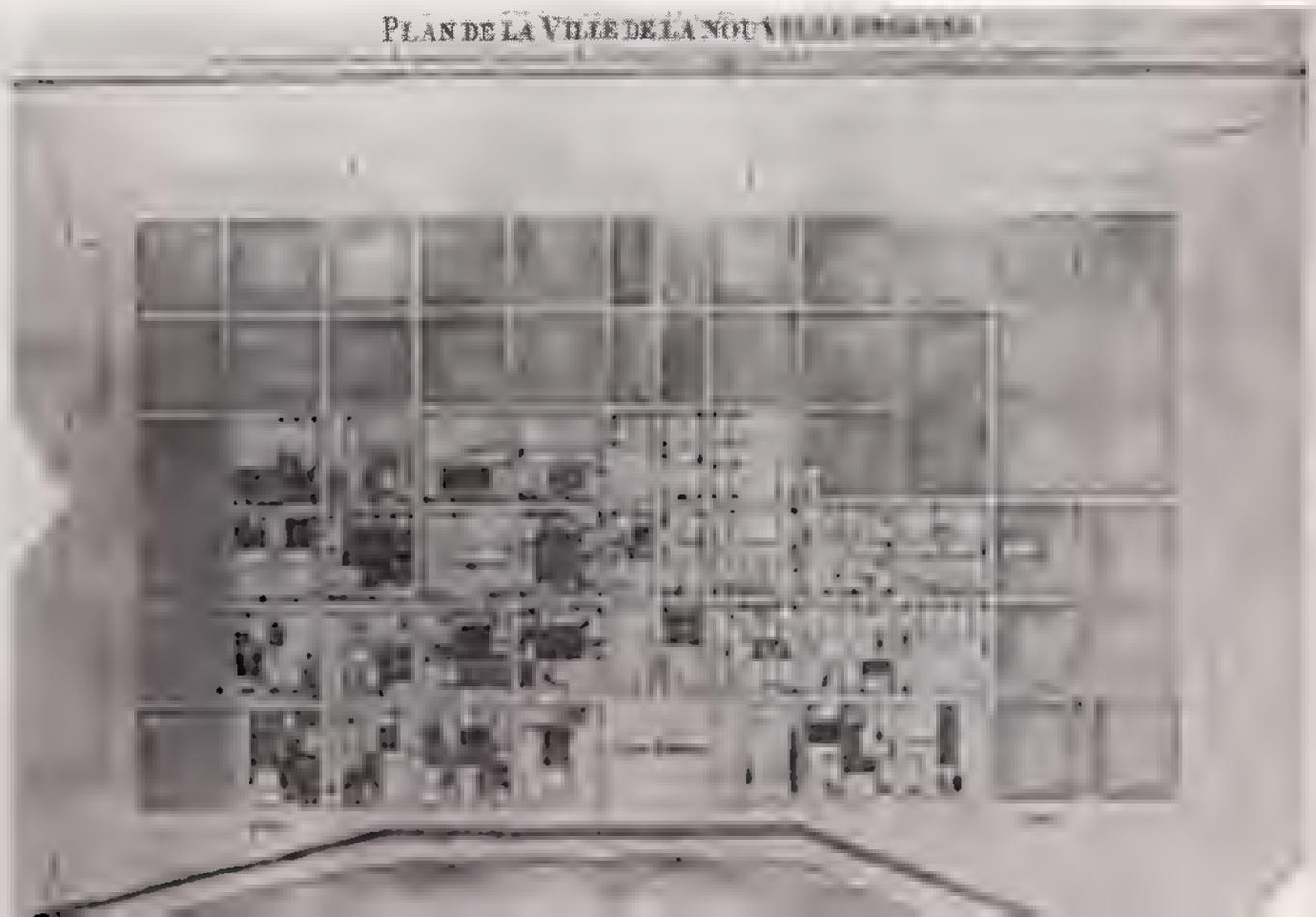
Month after month passed and no word was received from Milhet. Nothing had occurred, however, to indicate that Spain intended to take over her new possession; so the people back in the colony began to believe that perhaps Milhet's efforts had been successful. But their hopes were dampened when a letter arrived from Madrid announcing the appointment of one Don Antonio de Ulloa as Governor and stating that he would arrive shortly to assume his duties. Again, nothing happened. Weeks passed into more months while the French flag continued to fly over the government buildings. Still the people kept hoping that something would yet happen to keep Spain from taking over the colony.

Then, on a dismal day in March 1766—more than three years after the cession of Louisiana to Spain—Ulloa landed at New Orleans. Expecting to take command of the French troops upon his arrival, he had sailed with but a small detachment of Spanish soldiers. But the French soldiers refused to serve under the Spanish flag. Ulloa, sensing the antagonism of the people and knowing that he could not exercise control without sufficient troops to support him, decided not to take immediate possession. For some reason he refused to recognize the legal French Superior Council and would not present his orders for

Jean Baptiste LeMoyne, Sieur de Bienville.

Robert Cavelier, Sieur de LaSalle.

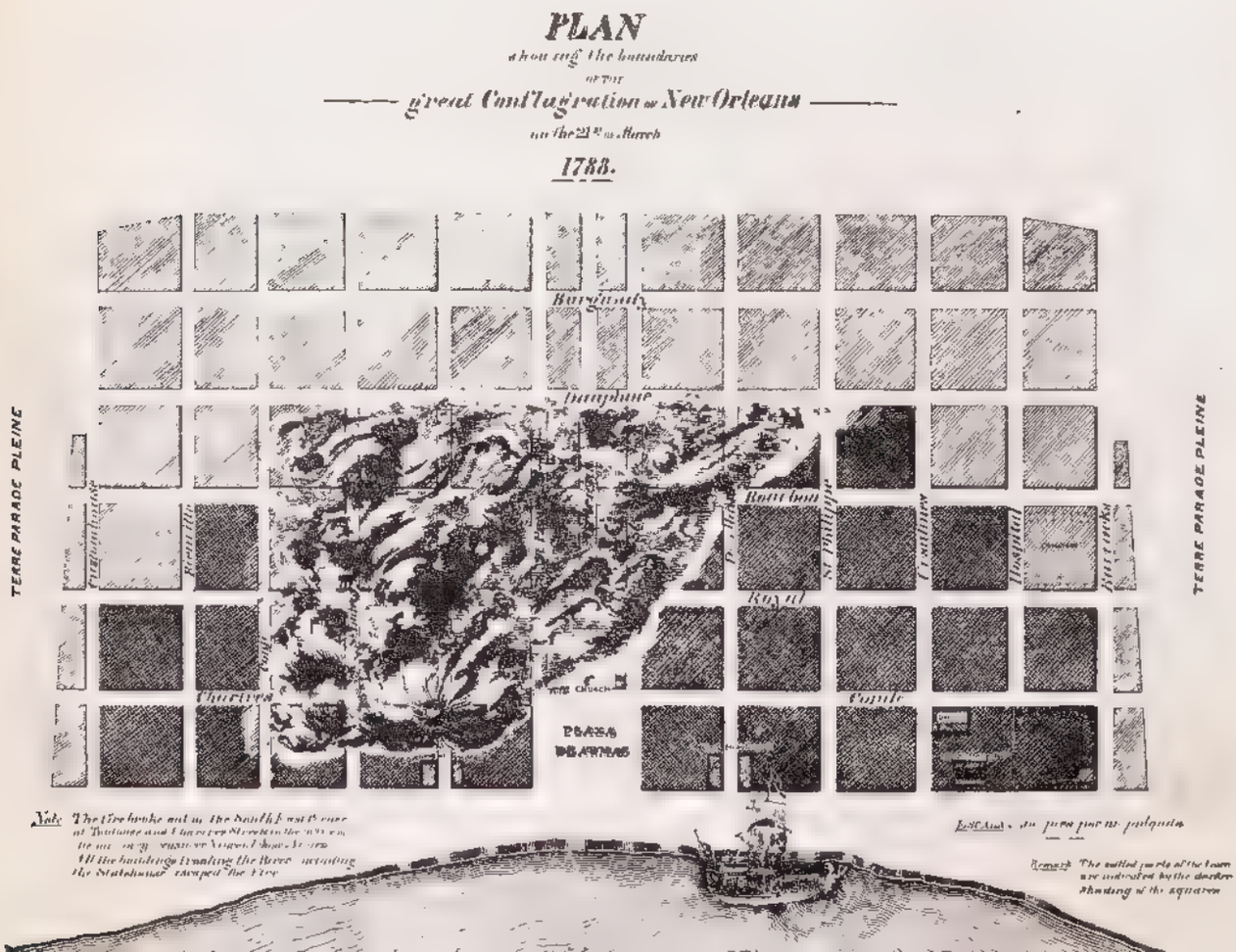
Old map of New Orleans prepared by Adrien de Pauger in 1724. The Mississippi at the time was known as the St. Louis River.



Don Antonio de Ulloa.

Don Alejandro O'Reilly.

Map of New Orleans sent by Governor Miro to the King of Spain showing the area destroyed by the fire of 1788. Shaded squares indicate area built up at the time.



the assumption of the governorship to that body. His reasons for this refusal of a perfectly normal procedure were never disclosed or understood, and they provide material for interesting conjecture to this day.

Although he had not taken possession of the colony, Ulloa acted as if he had complied with this legality, and he issued several mandates through Captain Aubry, who was still acting as Governor and conscientiously attempting to serve both France and Spain. Ulloa's decrees, in the eyes of later history, were considered sound; but the local citizens, impelled by anxiety and fear, saw in them only distress and suffering. Ulloa's indecision and uncertainty further encouraged the people in their antagonism.

A brilliant scientist and a successful naval officer who had worked with the French government on joint expeditions, Ulloa was considered by his sovereign to be unusually well qualified to become the chief executive of the former French colony. The Spanish King had wanted a strong first Governor for his new province and had especially selected Ulloa because of his experience. An officer who had long been accustomed to the honor due his exalted position and to immediate obedience, he could not understand the apparent lack of respect of the people. They, in turn, who had built a community out of the swamps and wilderness and who were used to living with and reasoning with their administrators, were angered by his aloofness. Ulloa thought them belligerent, imperious, and revolutionary. They, on the other hand, were convinced that his harsh and domineering manner was proof of the anticipated Spanish tyranny. Because of this basic lack of understanding, a clash was inevitable.

Businessmen, petitioned Ulloa for a hearing and requested that he reconsider his orders, but he would not listen to them. One day, in the midst of the consternation he had caused, Ulloa—for no apparent reason and not stating where he was going—suddenly left the city and sailed down-river, leaving Captain Aubry still in charge.

It was soon learned that the Spanish nobleman had established himself at the post at the mouth of the river, called "The Balize." At its mouth the Mississippi separates into

several smaller branches. Early French seamen had constructed a beacon, or balize, in the swamp, to guide ships into the deepest and most practical channel. It is flat, dreary, and marshy country, where even today no roads can exist and where no settlement is practical. There Ulloa spent the winter. No one knew the reason for his abrupt departure and apparent desertion, but it was assumed that he had gone to meet Spanish troops coming in from Cuba.

The real reason for Ulloa's hasty and unexplained exile into the somber swamps soon became known, however. Word leaked back to New Orleans that Ulloa, a man of fifty, had been engaged to a beautiful young heiress from Peru, the Marchioness de Abrado. Unwilling to commit herself to the rigors of a new country when she had every luxury she wanted at home, the Marchioness delayed her arrival for several months while the grandee waited aboard his anchored ship. Seven months after Ulloa went to The Balize, the promised bride finally appeared. They were quietly married by the Governor's chaplain, after which they proceeded to New Orleans.

But the great lady did nothing to increase the Governor's popularity. She confined herself to her residence and to the company of those who had accompanied her from Peru. Shunning local society completely, she would not even worship in the church, attending Mass only in her private chapel. Whether Ulloa's regulations were improper or despotic is debatable, but to the real or imagined wrongs of his orders were added the poisons caused by the introduction of social class distinctions. This emotional factor tautened the tension that was already near the bursting point.

During Ulloa's sojourn on the river pass, Jean Milhet had returned to New Orleans to report that after two years' absence he had not even been able to obtain an audience with the King. As long as Milhet was away hope had kept alive in the colony that the King of France might listen to the delegates and in some manner arrange for New Orleans to continue under the rule of the Bourbon. It was now quite evident that France had no intention of interfering with the situation, and the people had to accept the fact that they could expect nothing from their former sovereign. With the realization that they were

deserted by their mother country and faced with absorption by the despotic and hated Spanish, a wave of terror again spread over the province.

The feeling against Spain became so strong that men began to talk of resisting the new regime. Leaders emerged in various parts of the colony. In New Orleans it was natural that the people would look to the already appointed spokesmen, Lafrénière and Milhet. Joseph Villeré, a brother-in-law of Lafrénière, represented the German settlement about thirty miles up the Mississippi. From the "cajun country" further up the river and to the west appeared Jean Baptiste Noyan and his brother, nephews of Bienville, the founder of New Orleans. Only a few years earlier these Acadians had suffered exile from the St. Lawrence region through a change in government and they were particularly susceptible to revolt. Nearly a dozen other leading businessmen and planters joined the leaders and held secret meetings at the spacious villa of a rich, beautiful widow, Madame Pradel, then outside the city at what is now the intersection of Common and Carondelet Streets.

On October 28, 1768, a group led by Villeré and another headed by Noyan descended upon the city. The guns at the city's gates had previously been spiked. The few soldiers, being Frenchmen, were sympathetic to the civilians and no resistence was offered. A mass meeting was held in the Place d'Armes and another petition was prepared and signed by 560 citizens, listing the wrongs that the people felt had been heaped upon them and demanding the banishment of Ulloa from Louisiana. The Superior Council, piqued by Ulloa's disregard of their authority, acted upon the demands of the assembled populace and issued an order expelling the Spanish commandant from the colony. Ulloa responded to this rebellion by hurriedly transferring himself and family to his flagship, the *Volante,* at anchor in the harbor. That night, under the protection of darkness, the hawsers were secretly and quietly cut, presumably by the revolutionists, and the vessel began drifting downstream with the current. When it was brought under control its sails were hoisted, and the ship continued away from New Orleans bearing the unhappy Governor back to Spain. Everybody breathed again with relief.

For nearly a year the colony, the first in America to rebel against a European power, engaged in self-rule. But saner minds knew that a grave insult had been given to a powerful nation and that a day of accounting was certain. A second delegation was sent to Paris for aid, but the emissaries were clearly informed by the King's counsellors that they were considered trouble-makers. The aging Louis XV was more interested in his politically inept but otherwise satisfactory mistress, Countess Du Barry, than he was in the problems of his former province. He just could not be bothered. Overtures for aid were then made to the Governor of the English colony at Pensacola. Normally he would have been receptive to such an entreaty; but British colonies were beginning to show signs of wanting independence, and no English official was anxious to contribute to a successful uprising elsewhere which might encourage revolt against the British Crown. The insurgents of Frenchtown had started something that was too big for them. They had made their bed but found it not comfortable. The population of New Orleans was then about 1,500 people, with less than 6,000 in the entire colony—a rather pathetic and unimpressive society to imagine itself capable of standing among the nations of the world.

3

SPANISH BUTCHER

If the reason for Ulloa's refusing to present his credentials was because he did not possess any, his successor was burdened with no such lack. One morning, in July 1769, a boat came up the river bringing the news that a fleet of Spanish warships was at The Balize, awaiting favorable winds in order to ascend the river. This news naturally caused great excitement in New Orleans, particularly to the leaders of the insurrection. Later a proclamation appeared, stating that Don Alejandro O'Reilly, commanding a flotilla of 24 warships, 4,500 selected troops, and 50 pieces of artillery would soon present himself and take over the government of Louisiana in the name of Charles III, King of Spain. This impending naval power was unhesitatingly considered to be proper credentials, and the Superior Council hastily prepared to receive the new official.

O'Reilly, in company with a group of his countrymen, had in his youth, fled his native Ireland because of religious and political difficulties. He had then enlisted in the Spanish army and begun a distinguished career as a professional soldier. Of keen intelligence, he had advanced rapidly, gaining wide experience and a reputation for dependability and efficiency. Through presence of mind and fearlessness he had once saved the life of his King during an insurrection and an attack on the palace. The gratitude of the sovereign, together with O'Reilly's own natural capability, had elevated him to the rank of Major

General and the highest military position in Spain. That the King felt it advisable to send a person of such stature to Louisiana indicated the importance with which the Louisiana rebellion was viewed in Spain.

But time had cooled the ardor of the insurgents, and the futility of resistance against the portended military and naval strength of Spain was quite clear. Acting upon the advice of Aubry, the leaders of the rebellion, Lafrénière and Milhet, together with René Marquis, a Captain of militia who had joined the rebels, set out for The Balize as representatives of the colony to assure the new Governor of the willingness of the people to capitulate.

General O'Reilly received the delegation aboard his flagship with the utmost courtesy, listened to their statements, and expressed appreciation for the proffered cooperation of the people. He stated, however, that those responsible for the seditious acts against Spain would have to be brought to account. When O'Reilly used the word "seditious," Lafrénière interrupted him and raised an objection, but the General calmly raised his arm and gently replied, "Be at ease, gentlemen! I will listen to your arguments with pleasure at the proper time." He hastily added that all concerned would be fairly and considerately treated. He then asked the messengers to join him at dinner, and entertained them with all the grace and courtesy shown to guests of honor. After dining, O'Reilly suggested that they go up on deck and enjoy the cool, balmy evening.

Years of successful accomplishment shone forth in the assured bearing of the Spanish nobleman as he strolled along the deck of his flagship. By an undeclared understanding the guests were silent, so as not to disturb the reverie of the great man. A cautious breeze blew across the deck as if it, too, sensed the importance of the moment and, not wishing to intrude, it disappeared into space. Stars shone so clearly in the clear sub-tropical sky that they seemed almost within reach. Not a sound disturbed the peacefulness of the moment except for the barely audible tugging of the turbid current against the ship, as if the water were trying to entice the vessel to accompany it from the river into the Gulf of Mexico.

The Stars and Stripes fly over the Plaza d'Armes for the first time December 20, 1803 as the tri-color of France descends from the pole where it had flown for only 20 days. Note the Cathedral without the rounded roof and the Cabildo with the old belfrys and without the central spire as these buildings appeared then.

The Louisiana Purchase included all or part of thirteen States and doubled the size of the United States. It cost four cents an acre for 900,000 square miles.

The old prison cell in the Cabildo where Pierre Laffite, the pirate brother of Jean Laffite, was confined for several months before his mysterious escape.

Reaching the bow, the General hesitated as if about to say something, turned, and gazed off toward the horizon. The visitors maintained a respectful distance. In a moment the General did speak, slowly, unemotionally, as if he did not realize that he was giving voice to his thoughts. "Ah, gentlemen, what a fine night to go away!" Then, with a hardly perceptible start, as if he suddenly realized that he had said too much, he resumed his promenading.

Back in New Orleans, the deputies were high in their praise of O'Reilly. The delegates had been charmed and were frank in their admiration of the General. They spoke of the cordiality of their reception aboard the flagship, and predicted a joyous ceremony on the transfer of the colony, and prophesied fair administration thereafter. Because of the glowing reports brought back by the messengers, the arrival of the new Governor was awaited with great expectancy. The entire colony seethed with excitement and anticipation.

On August 15, after a tedious trip up the river, the fleet appeared and anchored in the harbor opposite the city. Aubry called on O'Reilly aboard the flagship, to pay his respects and to arrange for the formal transfer of the colony to Spain. O'Reilly's arrival was destined to be greatly different from that of Ulloa. The twenty-four ships-of-war moored along the levee were gaily decorated in full dress and presented the most impressive and imposing spectacle that had yet been seen on the Mississippi.

On the day of the formal transfer, at the appointed hour, a cannon boomed aboard the flagship as a signal to announce the beginning of the ceremonies. Spanish troops, fully armed and in dress uniforms started down the various gangplanks and marched into the Place d'Armes where they lined up on three sides. On the side nearest the church, later to become the St. Louis Cathedral, the French troops under Aubry had already formed. When the last company had marched into place the square was filled with troops, except for a small ceremonial area in the center with an open pathway leading to O'Reilly's man-of-war, moored at the levee.

The air was hushed. Everyone waited. Another cannon-shot broke the silence. Artillery and infantry in the square joined

the salutes of the ships in the harbor as the new Commandant appeared, hesitated for an instant to acknowledge the salute, and then started ashore. Amidst a rolling of drums and a blowing of trumpets he entered the remaining clear space, accompanied by his staff and personal guard. All were arrayed in brilliant velvet-and-gold brocade uniforms, the officers with massive swords and metal helmets and the guards bearing silver maces. The prestige and power of Spain was quite evident and extremely impressive.

O'Reilly and Aubry met in the center of the square, near the flagpole from which the French colors were still flying. O'Reilly presented his credentials and read his orders. Aubry translated them for the people and then announced that they were thereby released from their allegiance to France and would thenceforth be subjects of the King of Spain. Aubry then presented O'Reilly with the keys to the gates of the city while the flag of France was lowered and replaced with that of Spain. Military ceremonies followed, ending in a grand parade. There could be no doubt in any man's mind now in which direction proper allegiance lay.

O'Reilly ensconced himself in regal pomp in one of the finest houses of the town. He had hardly seated himself when he asked Aubry for a list of names of the participants in the rebellion and the part played by each member. Upon receipt of this list, O'Reilly ordered all who appeared on it to be arrested immediately.

From the respite gained by the reports of O'Reilly's expected fairness and leniency, New Orleans was again thrown into a state of terror by the sudden arrest of so many leading men of the city. Wives, sweethearts, and friends rushed to the General's headquarters and pleaded with O'Reilly for understanding; but he was adamant. The prisoners freely admitted having done the things they were charged with, but they denied that they had violated any law of Spain, since Spain at the time had not legally taken control of Louisiana. After a lengthy trial, conducted according to Spanish law, which varies considerably from our accepted procedures in that the accused are not permitted to speak in their own behalf, all of the prisoners were found guilty. Six men, including Lafrénière,

Marquis, and Milhet were sentenced to death. Villere had been killed under peculiar circumstances while undergoing trial. Several other prisoners were sentenced to varying terms in Spanish prisons, and the French officials were returned to France in disgrace. The properties of all of the condemned men were seized and forfeited to the government.

O'Reilly ordered the execution to take place on the day after the sentence was pronounced, and he refused to listen to the entreaties of friends of the condemned men who felt that the sentences should be approved by the King of Spain. The governor denied all rights of appeal and insisted that the sentence be carried out as ordered.

A pall hung over the city!

At three o'clock on the following day guards appeared at the jail to lead the condemned men to the military post for their execution. They were ready. That first terror that comes with the realization that there is no longer any hope, that they were to die, had been followed by resignation and acceptance of their fate. For all, that is, but Lafrénière. He scarcely heard the soothing words of the priest as the procession moved out of the old Spanish Prison, past the church down Chartres Street, toward the place of execution in the Barracks courtyard. Something strange kept trying to break into the mental consciousness of the leader of the rebellion. He had an overpowering feeling of frustration. Why did this have to turn out this way? What had gone wrong? But the answers would not come.

The condemned men, declining the courtesy of the hoodwink, were lined up facing the firing squad. The officer read the order of execution and the command to "get ready" was given. At that instant, as the muscles of the captives tensed in final acceptance of their doom, Lafrénière realized what had been disturbing him. In the confusion of everything that had happened in the past few months there had been insufficient time for events to drop into their proper position. But now Lafrénière understood.

Too late!

In his mind Lafrénière was suddenly transported back to the flagship at the mouth of the river a few weeks earlier, when the delegation had visited the Spanish general. O'Reilly's

remark as he strolled the deck on that starlit night returned to him with a clarity and meaning that it did not have when it was uttered. As the full possible significance of the General's casual observation hit him, Lafrénière, bursting with sudden emotion, tore at the thongs that bound his hands behind him. Unable to free himself and realizing that he had but an instant to live, he yelled, contemptuously, defiantly, "Ah, gentlemen, what a fine night for a trip!" Those assembled for the execution thought he had suddenly gone mad. The officer in charge of the firing squad was momentarily disconcerted, but he quickly recovered. Marquis and Milhet, also startled, turned and, an expression of enlightenment was seen to cross their countenances as the officer called, "Fire!"

The muskets blared. It was all over.

Captain Jacinto Panis, the officer in charge of the firing squad, advanced to the fallen forms. All dead. One wonders what were his feelings eight years later, when he married the widow of Joseph Milhet, one of the men he had just killed. First you take a man's life, then you take to bed his wife.

Did Lafrénière suddenly realize, just an instant before his death, that O'Reilly had given him and his associates a way out, a chance for freedom that they were too stupid to perceive? Was it possible that the Spaniard, knowing what was ahead for the men, knowing what he had to do, felt sympathetic toward them and tried to help them? Historians do not agree to this day whether O'Reilly's remark was a deliberate invitation to freedom or merely a casual pleasantry about the state of the weather, such as everybody indulges in. The principals are long since gone, but a romantic mystery remains with us. Was O'Reilly a machine, a "bloody murderer," as he was later called? Or was he a human being who through circumstances was placed in a position of responsibility where unpleasant action, although necessary, was repugnant? Quien sabe?

Yes—who knows?

It is customary to permit conquered nations to retain their laws and usages during a period of adjustment to a new system. O'Reilly, however, largely because of the general participation of officials, businessmen, and planters in the insurrection, decided to make the change to Spanish compliance immediate

The King of the Mystick Krewe of Comus parades before his subjects on the way to the ball on Mardi Gras. The final night parade ends the Carnival season.

The Lovely Queen of the "Krewe of Orion" with her Ladies in Waiting.

A beautiful Carnival Queen. The voluminous gown was designed to be worn but once, the night of the Ball for which it was made.

The Queen and her Court Maidens attended by the Ladies in Waiting promenade before the invited members of the Carnival Club while the King waits.

and complete. He established and put into effect an entire new plan of government in accordance with Spanish procedures. Harsh though this action was, it was nevertheless effective. From that time on it seemed that O'Reilly attempted to calm the fears of the people and tried to help them in every way possible. The colonists, in turn, cooperated, and a period of prosperity followed that was a credit to the Spanish rule. The King of Spain could not leave so valuable a man as O'Reilly in such a relatively unimportant place any longer than was necessary; so in October 1770, when his work was completed and the affairs of the colony were running smoothly, O'Reilly was recalled to Spain. He left behind him peculiarly mixed emotions of hate, defiance, and respect.

Thus, 70 years after Iberville and Bienville first planted the flag of France in the lower Mississippi region, one great period of New Orleans' history ended and another began. The seven hectic years involved in the transfer of the colony from France to Spain appear as perhaps the most dramatic, the most confused, the most mismanaged, and the most debated period in Louisiana history. Many questions are still heatedly discussed and remain unsolved. Was Lafrénière, with his band of insurgents, a hero, a martyr to independence in America, or merely a rabble-rouser and a hotheaded fool? Was O'Reilly ruthless or compassionate? Did he follow the instructions and wishes of his King? Was he butcher or humanitarian?

Again—quien sabe?

4

ANOTHER LOYALTY

But in a different part of the country another revolution was fomenting that was to have a much more successful outcome. On July 4, 1776, it reached a climax when the British colonies in North America announced their independence from their mother country. Two years after this American Declaration of Independence, France, impressed with the pertinacity of the revolutionists and seeing the opportunity of humiliating and weakening her powerful and traditional rival, declared war on Great Britain. Spain, too, favored the Americans, sharing France's envy and distrust of the British. Spanish officials assisted the Revolution by permitting American agents to establish headquarters in New Orleans, from which badly needed supplies of guns, ammunition, and food were obtained. Holding off for another year to insure that it was expedient, Spain then entered the war as an ally of the Americans. Immediately upon the declaration of war, Galvez, the Governor of Louisiana, attacked and defeated the British posts of Manchac, Baton Rouge, and Natchez, on the Mississippi above New Orleans. Then, with no danger of attack from the rear, he gave his attention to conquering the British holdings at Mobile and Pensacola. When the war ended and Britain acknowledged the independence of her former colonies, Spain was granted East and West Florida, and British rule in the south was at an end.

As America grew, New Orleans, because of her strategic lo-

cation, had little choice but to develop also. There were no railroads, and the rivers were the only outlets for the products of farm and factory. Rivers were the arteries of commerce. New Orleans sat as if at the mouth of a huge cornucopia, receiving the blessings of the rapidly expanding northern trade that flowed into her waiting arms with the Mississippi. Spanish rule, now accepted by the people, although in some quarters reluctantly, had turned out to be mild, just and progressive. Madame New Orleans tasted and found palatable a new fashion—prosperity.

Then, disaster struck!

It was Good Friday, March 21, 1788, and the whole city was faithfully observing the church holiday. In the private chapel of Don Vicente José Nunez, the military treasurer of the colony, candles were burning on the altar. A gust of wind blew the curtains against the lighted tapers and in an instant the house was ablaze. Because it was a holy day, the Capuchin priests refused to allow the bells in the church, which were used as a fire signal, to be rung. Consequently, before enough men arrived to be of any help, the fire was beyond control.

Nourished by a strong south wind, the fire became a conflagration that swept destruction before it. Everything went—the government houses, the jail, dwellings of rich and poor alike, the business section, the church, and, with fateful irony, the monastery of the Capuchins who had refused to let the bells be sounded. When the fire had spent its wrath four-fifths of the city was wiped out. In all 856 homes and buildings were consumed, and only a row of houses along the levee escaped. Out of the path of the fire, the Ursuline Convent, one of the more substantial buildings of brick and tile, was spared—"by a miracle," according to the convent records. It is still standing.

But fate had not decreed the demise of the city, only that she take heed. Crushed and beaten to her knees, in ashes and in ruins, she was down but she was not defunct. The town that had been so nearly wiped out by the flames was a community of poorly arranged, crude, ill-built, mostly wooden structures. In its place arose a stately Spanish city of brick and plaster, of iron and tile, of homogeneity and character. Our French-

town, the French Quarter or Vieux Carré, that we know today is that Spanish city that arose from the ruins of the original French Nouvelle Orléans.

In times of great emergency great men appear who, endowed either with financial means or unusual capabilities, through unselfishness or because they see an opportunity for profit, come to the aid of their less fortunate neighbors. Such a figure was Don Andrès Almonaster y Roxas, an Andalusian of noble birth and the richest man in the colony. Standing amidst the smoldering ruins of the city, he pledged to rebuild the government buildings, the church, the monastery for the priests, and the hospital. The St. Louis Church, raised to the status of cathedral shortly after completion, the Cabildo which is the Spanish government building, and the monastery now known as the Presbytère, still stand facing the old Place d'Armes, their facades showing only slightly the touch of time, imposing monuments to one man's faith and generosity. Don Andrès' hospital, now the great and world-famous New Orleans Charity Hospital, has since outgrown its quarters and is located in the modern city.

Through Almonaster's encouragement the rest of the city was rebuilt. No need to replace shack with shanty—money from government and sympathetic planters, new materials, and advanced ideas all made their contribution to rebirth and reconstruction. Buildings flush with the banquettes, as the sidewalks are still called in New Orleans, to permit a cool courtyard in the rear, were designed by Spanish architects and erected by Spanish builders. Large fan-shaped windows and subtly curved staircases vied with delicate wrought-iron scrollwork on gate and balcony for eminence of beauty. Street lights fueled by fish–and whale–oil were erected, and a regular policing system with *serenos* patrolling the streets and calling out the time was started. New Orleans was springing back, maturing, and when the reconstruction was finally completed Frenchtown had earned a reputation as the most beautiful city in North America.

Along with the other construction, an elaborate Spanish prison was built at the rear of the Cabildo, on St. Peter Street. Known as the "Calabozo," it is from this that our American slang term "calaboose," for jail is derived. During the con-

truction of the prison, or shortly after its completion, Governor Miro received an official call from a Spanish Capuchin, Fray Antonio de Sedella, who had arrived in the colony a short time previously. Father Sedella presented credentials that certified him to be the King's representative of the Holy Roman Inquisition, and he informed the Governor that he had made all preparations with great secrecy and caution, that they were now completed, and that he was ready. Governor Miro did not inquire what the priest meant by being "ready." He knew. But later events proved that the Governor was ready also. The following night, so the historians tell us, after the priest had retired, a contingent of the Governor's soldiers routed the priest out of bed, seized him, and put him aboard a vessel returning to Spain. "When I read the communication of that Capuchin," wrote Miro to the Cabinet at Madrid, "I shuddered. The very name Inquisition uttered in New Orleans would not only stop immigration but would drive away those already here."

"Thus," wrote Professor Alcee Fortier, an eminent Louisiana historian, "did Louisiana escape the horrors of the Inquisition."

Grace King, a famous New Orleans author, tells us: "A half century later, when the old calabozo was demolished, secret dungeons containing instruments of torture were discovered, which were supposed to be some of the preparations for the disciplining of colonists, announced as complete, by Padre Antonio."

To this Lyle Saxon, the Dean of Louisiana literature, adds: "Old newspaper files tell of the discovery of an underground passage which led from the rear of the Cathedral, or from even beyond that point in the direction of the Capuchin monastery—a passage which ended somewhere near the Calabozo. These newspaper accounts are very strange. One day the paper tells of the discovery and promises further disclosures on the following day, when the tunnel has been explored. But it is evident that some pressure was brought to bear on the editor, for there is not a line in any of the later editions of the same paper regarding this discovery. One can only draw his own conclusions."

Yes, one can only draw his own conclusions.

For some reason the guardian angel who is supposed to look after the affairs of men and nations must have been severely piqued at the inhabitants of New Orleans, for in no other way can her seemingly perverse abandonment of their interests be explained. On December 3, 1794, just as she was beginning to recover from the flaming calamity of six years before, tragedy descended again in the form of another devastating fire.

The second fire also came during a religious holiday, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. It was started by some children playing with flint and tinder in the courtyard of the home of Francois Mayronne, at 624 Royal Street. This time fanned by a north wind, the flames spread to the stables where hay was stored and within an hour the whole area was ablaze. When it had been brought under control it was found that 212 buildings, including all of the stores, had been destroyed. Although the toll of buildings burned was fewer than in the fire of 1788, the Governor stated in his report that the financial losses of this conflagration were much greater, and the almost complete loss of foodstuff in the stores caused untold hardship.

But construction was not stopped, it was merely retarded. By now adversity and tribulation were accepted as the normal mode of New Orleans' existence. Construction continued with renewed determination and vigor.

France was still having her troubles. To the heavy costs of maintaining a nearly continuous state of war were added the not inconsiderable financial demands of supporting Louis XVI in the manner to which he chose to be accustomed. This kept the French treasury in a consistent state of depletion. When additional taxes were demanded from a populace already bled to the point of exhaustion, the people rebelled. A revolution erupted which ushered in a period of strife such as France had never known before. It also brought into prominence one of the most remarkable figures in history, Napoleon Bonaparte.

Coming from the army and gaining complete control of the country, Napoleon cleared up the difficult internal situation and restored an orderly government to France. He then turned his attention toward regaining some of the colonies that had been lost through earlier mismanagement. The loss of

Three Queens. One of the favorite sights of Carnival time in Trinidad.

Mardi Gras float, identity of the riders is hidden by rubber masks. Outrageous bands solicit tickets supposed to bring good luck to the fortunate ticket-buyer.

Girl. My aching feet. Carnival street scene. Tomorrow is ours again. Or Mardi Gras? Royal Street intrigue street in background.

A Carnival parade forming on St. Charles Street. It will move into Canal Street and then through the French Quarter to terminate at the Municipal Auditorium.

Louisiana had long been mourned in France, and hope for its recovery had been kept alive. Napoleon decided that Louisiana must come back to France.

Charles IV of Spain was aware that his control over Louisiana was weak and he was therefore willing to negotiate with Napoleon for its return. An agreement was eventually reached in 1800 whereby all of Louisiana was ceded back to France, in return for which Napoleon set up a kingdom in Italy to be under the control of Spain. A treaty was made, but, as in earlier regal covenants, the change in suzerainty was kept secret form the colonists. But again rumors leaked out and they reached the President of the United States, Thomas Jefferson, who was considerably worried as a result. The thought of having such an ambitious and powerful military Titan as Napoleon right alongside of the new republic, in possession of such a large part of North America, was cause for grave concern.

Jefferson asked Robert R. Livingston, the American Minister to France, to find out from Napoleon what the situation regarding Louisiana actually was and what Napoleon's intentions were. Upon learning that the reports were true Livingston spent many weeks attempting to induce Napoleon to sell New Orleans to the United States; but the Frenchman refused to accept this proposal, stating that he intended to assume immediate possession of the entire province. When he began his preparations to take over the colony, however, he ran into unforeseen difficulties. By the Treaty of Amiens England had made peace with France in 1802, but at best it was a shaky truce. The century-old struggle for colonial and commercial supremacy had not been resolved; and with prospects of another war with England Napoleon had to maintain a large fleet nearby to protect Louisiana from possible attack by the British. Considering Santo Domingo the ideal spot for a base of supplies and operations, Napoleon established a large army there. But yellow fever struck, and the army was almost entirely wiped out. A second army was sent, and this too succumbed to the disease. Napoleon was wide open to attack by the British in the South Atlantic and it worried him. This unexpected situation delayed his plans for taking possession of Louisiana.

Livingston meanwhile was still trying to buy New Orleans,

but was making no apparent progress. By this time Napoleon considered another war with England inevitable. With the debacle in Santo Domingo in mind, he suddenly startled the American emissary by a change in attitude. He asked if the United States would be interested in purchasing the whole of the Louisiana Territory. Livingston, now aided by James Monroe, who was later to become President of the United States, was unprepared, for this involved a great deal more money and territory than had been considered. But when Napoleon made up his mind, he demanded action. He felt that England would be able to take Louisiana anyway; so needing money, he decided to get what he could for it. Furthermore, by thus strengthening the growing United States, not only would formidable opposition to England be developed but Britain's plans in the Mississippi would be thwarted. Napoleon informed the Americans that if they wanted Louisiana they must act at once. Knowing that it would take weeks to get word from Jefferson, and fearful of losing this wonderful bargain, Livingston and Monroe went ahead on their own responsibility and agreed to the purchase. The price was about $15,000,000, or about four cents an acre, for an area of nearly nine hundred thousand square miles, which was later to be made into thirteen states. Next to the winning of independence and the formation of the Union, the purchase of Louisiana from France is regarded as the most important event in the history of the United States.

While all this was taking place in Versailles no official notice had been given to the colonists as to what was going on. Some of the people could remember when they had been under the French flag thirty-five years before, and to them the prospect of being under France again was appealing. But to the majority, now leavened by time and the Spanish and American influences to which they had been exposed, the rumors were accepted with little interest.

On March 26, 1803, Pierre Clément Laussat, the French Colonial Prefect, arrived in New Orleans as Napoleon's representative to prepare for taking over the colony. Laussat's position was similar to that of Ulloa years before. The troops with which he expected to support his authority never arrived,

having been defeated by yellow fever in Santo Domingo. Because of secret opposition by the Spanish authorities, who encouraged a revolt against the impending change, it was not until eight months after his arrival that Laussat felt able to assume possession of the province. The formal ceremony took place in the Place d'Armes on November 30, 1803, and Louisiana came back under France once more. But the French flag that replaced the Spanish ensign was not the fleur-de-lis of the Bourbons that had flown there previously but the striped red, white, and blue tricolor of the French Republic.

The reign of France was to be brief. The transfer had barely been completed when General James C. Wilkinson and William C. C. Claiborne, who was to be the new Governor of the Territory, arrived to receive Louisiana for the United States. On December 20, 1803, just twenty days after having passed from Spain to France, Louisiana again changed hands.

The ritual of transfer, taking place again in the Place d'Armes, was impressive, as befitted the importance of the occasion. The New Orleans militia assembled early in the square and passed in review before Laussat, who watched from the balcony of the Cabildo. A cannon announced the approach of the American troops, coming from their encampment about two miles outside of the city. As they entered the gate a twenty-one gun salute greeted the cavalcade. Headed by General Wilkinson and Governor-to-be Claiborne, the soldiers drew up opposite the militia in the square. The General and the new Governor dismounted and entered the Council room of the Cabildo, where the reading of the treaty and other documents of transfer took place. Laussat delivered the keys of the city, which had hardly had time to get warm in his hands, to Claiborne; and the officials went out on the balcony before the citizens and soldiers in the square. Here Laussat freed the people of their allegiance to the French Republic and presented the new American Governor. Claiborne made a short address in English—a language few of his hearers understood—welcoming the people as citizens of the United States and assuring them that their liberty, their property, and their religion were safe for all time.

As the new Governor finished speaking a flourish of drums

was heard, which gradually increased in crescendo. The French flag that had been flying from the flagpole in the center of the square started slowly to descend. At the same time the Stars and Stripes began to climb the flagpole. As they met midway they stopped for a moment and flew together. A salute was fired. Then as if there was no further need for hesitancy, the Stars and Stripes climbed proudly to the top. There it has been flying, with but one brief interlude, ever since. The French flag was lowered, folded carefully, and carried away.

Through this transaction the area of the United States was practically doubled. "Today," said Robert R. Livingston, "the United States takes her place among the powers of the first rank."

5

GROWING PAINS

When New Orleans came to the United States in late 1803 it was then, as it is now, the most unusual city in America. The Spanish buildings had transformed the old town into a new city, and the Cabildo and the St. Louis Cathedral had become showplaces famous throughout the country. The population of Frenchtown was only about 8,000, but it had already become one of the most important seaports in North America and it was well started on the course of its manifest destiny. It was growing, and a new settlement had been begun by some of the recent arrivals at the southwest corner of the city. Yet, in so many ways New Orleans was still a provincial town.

Fronting the Mississippi ran a levee to keep the river from overflowing into the city in time of high water. This joined walls of upended logs driven into the ground along the other three sides of the city to provide protection against hostile Indians and other enemies. Crudely established in the time of Bienville and improved and strengthened by later Governors, the fortifications, or ramparts, together with the levee, made New Orleans a walled city. The ramparts ran from the river along the present Canal Street to Rampart Street, then along Rampart Street to Esplanade, and then down Esplanade back to the river. These were the original limits of the city as laid out by de Pauger nearly 100 years before and they are the boundaries of the French Quarter still.

Outside the stockades was a ditch or moat forty feet wide and seven feet deep, filled with water. The earth that had been taken from the moat when it was dug was banked against the logs on the inside. In each wall was a gate through which people passed during the day, but which were locked and guarded at night. One of these gates was located near the present intersection of Canal and Royal Streets. Where the walls met the river were two forts, Fort St. Louis on the Canal Street side, just about where the United States Custom House stands today, and Fort St. Charles, on the Esplanade, where the United States Mint is now located. In 1792 Governor Carondelet added Fort Burgoyne, near the present Canal and Rampart Street intersection; Fort St. John, at Rampart and the Esplanade; and Fort St. Ferdinand, midway between the two on Rampart Street, where Beauregard Square is now located. Today an elaborate pumping and drainage system that is an engineering marvel keeps the great modern city dry, but in 1803 practically the entire area outside of the stockade was swamp. At least one Governor reported that "expansion and growth outside of the boundaries of the city is impossible." He should see it today!

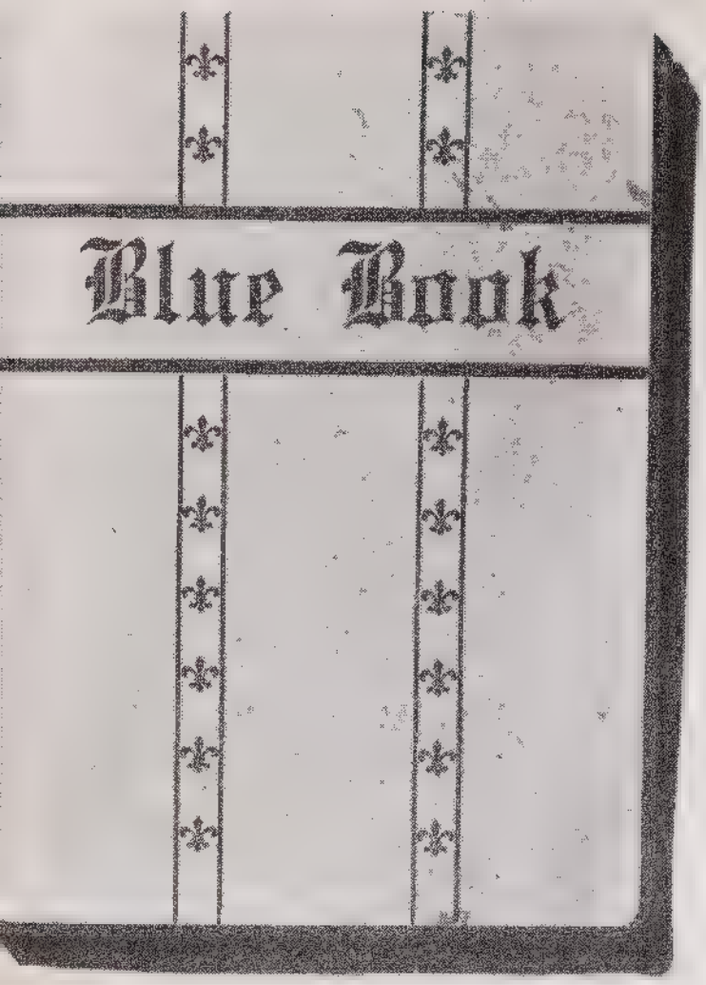
The forts and ramparts had been allowed to get into a bad state of decay and repair. The streets, although well laid out, were narrow and unpaved and were alternately dusty in dry weather or impassably muddy after a rain. Ditches had been dug on both sides of the streets for drainage; but these had not been kept open and they were choked with rubbish and weeds. Garbage and refuse of all kinds went into them, decayed rapidly in the heat and released an unbearable stench. Rats and other vermin, still a problem in any warm seaport, lived and bred unhindered. The banquettes, platforms of crude planks built off the ground along the buildings, had been neglected for so long that in many places they had rotted and dropped into the ditches. Both vehicular and pedestrian traffic was not only difficult but dangerous. Blame for these conditions was laid upon the Spanish authorities, who could see no practical reason for spending good money on a city that they were soon to lose.

With the American occupation New Orleans was unfused

The "Zulu King," Colored King of Carnival.

The only known likeness of Jean and Pierre Lafitte and Dominique You.

A Frenchtown "Spasm Band." Some of these aggregations number a half-dozen or more utilizing various commonplace devices to produce tones and rhythms.



Cover of the New Orleans "Blue Book."

PREFACE

"Honi Soit Qui Mal y Pense."

THIS Directory and Guide of the Sporting District has been before the people on many occasions, and has proven its authority to what is doing in the "Queer Zone."

Everybody who knows to-day from yesterday will say that the Blue Book is the right book for the right people

WHY NEW ORLEANS SHOULD HAVE THIS DIRECTORY

First Because it is the only district of its kind in the States set aside for the fast women by law.

Second Because it puts the stranger on a proper and safe path as to where he may go and be free from "Hold Ups," and any other game usually practiced upon the stranger.

Third – It regulates the women so that they may live in one district to themselves instead of being scattered over the city.

"Blue Book" Preface.

THIS BOOK MUST NOT BE MAILED

TO know the right from the wrong, to be sure of yourself, go through this little book and read it carefully, and then when you visit Storyville you will know the best places to spend your money and time, as all the BEST houses are advertised. Read all the "ads."

The book contains nothing but Facts, and is of the greatest value to strangers when in this part of the city. The Directory will be found alphabetically, under the heading "White" and "Colored," from alpha to omega The names in capitals are landladies only

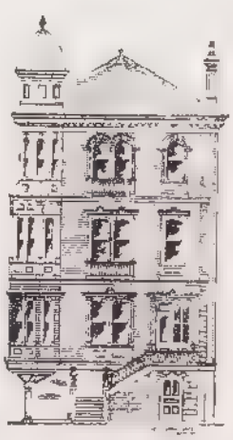
You will find the boundry of the Tenderloin District or Storyville: North side Iberville Street to South side St. Louis, and East side North Basin to West side North Robertson Streets

This is the boundry in which the women are compelled to live according to law

TENTH EDITION

"This Book Must Not Be Mailed."

Miss Josie Arlington



THE ARLINGTON

NOWHERE IN this country will you find a more complete and thorough sporting house than the Arlington

Absolutely and unquestionably the most decorative and costly fitted out sporting palace ever placed before the American public

The wonderful originality of everything that goes to fit out a mansion makes it the most attractive ever seen in this or the old country.

Miss Arlington after suffering a loss of many thousand dollars through a fire, has refurnished and remodeled the entire place at an enormous expense and the mansion is now a palace fit for kings

Within the great walls of this mansion will be found the work of great artists from Europe and America. Many articles from various Expositions will also be seen, and curios galore

PHONE MAIN 1888

"Blue Book" page touting "The Arlington."

with new blood strains, new objectives, and new ambitions. The Americans were quick to recognize the importance of New Orleans and the opportunities it offered. They started to pour into Frenchtown. During the next few years great changes were made, but they came slowly. The more languid and placid people of New Orleans resented the influx of the crass, commercially minded Americans, and showed resistance in every way possible. The French and Spanish, though often in disagreement, were of the same basic Latin nature, and they were united in their enmity toward the inrushing Americans. Accustomed to a life of ease and leisure, they could not adopt nor could they compete with the methods of the cold calculating American businessman. While the Latins were indulging in siesta, the newcomers were taking over their business. Something had to be done.

The word "Creole" comes from the Spanish *criollo*, meaning the offspring of Spanish parents born in the colonies, as distinguished from children born in the mother country. Unknown in Louisiana during the French occupation, the word came into use while the colony was under Spanish rule. Spoken by strange tongues, it was modified to become "Creole," and at the same time it took on a broader meaning. It came to include the descendants of both the Spanish and the French; and it included progeny of the fewer Germans, Irish, and Swiss settlers of the colony. This was the group whose forefathers had founded and developed the colony. Now they were faced with the liklihood of having their community snatched away from them. For decades this Latin group resisted the Americans, but it was a losing fight. Gradually a certain measure of cooperation and toleration was reached, and the factions lost their sharply defined identity. In the early days it was unthinkable for a Creole to associate with an American, but nature has a way of getting around such man-decreed barriers. Young people cannot understand the edicts and dicta of their elders, and gradually ignored them. It was the newer generation that broke down the animosity between the two factions. But the united aims of the Creoles to preserve and protect their way of life against the invaders resulted in the creation of a social aristocracy that exists proudly in New Orleans still. Admixture

of American blood with that of the original Creoles did nothing to diminish the prestige or dull the luster in which their descendants still bask in New Orleans today. In present-day New Orleans the Creoles are still the 400, the social register of the city. They are as proud of their heritage as were their forefathers of theirs. The word has become popularized and, used as an adjective applied to products, horses, etc., indicates that they are of the highest quality. Anything that is "creole" is the best in New Orleans. Somehow the belief has become widespread that the word denotes a person of mixed colored and white blood. This is definitely not true and, of course, it infuriates the real Creoles.

The Creoles distrusted Governor Claiborne, probably because he spoke neither Spanish nor French; and they resisted him thoroughly. Yet sound and constructive measures were put into effect. The fortifications were torn down, moats were filled, and rows of sycamore trees were planted all around the city. The more sumptuous homes had wells in their courtyards, but the water, being brackish, was unpotable and could be used only for scrubbing. Drinking water had to be brought in from the river in carts, then filtered or cleared by lime, alum, or charcoal. This was done in the large earthern jars called "ollas" which had been the containers for olive oil imported into the city. Many of these can be seen in various courtyards today throughout the French Quarter being used as ornaments, rain receptacles, or flower pots. Other houses had large barrel-like reservoirs on rooftops to catch and store rain water. These methods were crude, however, and work was started on the construction of a municipal water system. Relics of the wooden conduits used in this early water-distribution system can still be seen in the museum of the Cabildo. Improvements were made in the lighting system and efforts were made to clean up the streets. Frenchtown was now an American city.

In 1812, despite the opposition of other States, particularly Massachusetts—which threatened to withdraw from the Union if the Territory was taken in—Louisiana became a State. While understanding the reluctance of the Louisianans to give up French and Spanish, Congress recognized the importance of a standard language and insisted that the new State adopt English

as the official language. This required that the new constitution, laws, and court proceedings be written in that language.

No stable monetary system had ever been in effect for very long in New Orleans, but perhaps the most satisfactory had been that under the Spaniards. At regular intervals a large amount of silver coin was brought in from Mexico and the West Indies to defray the expenses of operating the government. Occasionally paper currency called "liberanza" was issued. The most important of the coins was the Spanish trade dollar or "piece of eight," which had a value of eight reals. The circulation of this specie greatly expedited trade for it not only established a standard of exchange but, being of precious metal, it had a value of its own. Few smaller coins were available, so practical-minded merchants cut the pieces of eight into halves, quarters, and eighths, which were then circulated in trading for their relative value. The eighth became known in New Orleans as a "bit" and the quarter as "two bits" and ha, we have the origin of the term that is still applied to our American quarter. It is interesting to know that a coin was later circulated in Louisiana and the rest of the country called the "picayune" which had the value of half a bit, or six and a quarter cents. Used today, the word "picayune" means something of little value or importance. Spanish silver was the chief kind of coin used in the English colonies and it formed the basis for the currency of the United States, our silver dollar being copied after the Spanish piece of eight. Genuine picayunes and other coins can be purchased as souvenirs in the coin shops of Frenchtown.

After Louisiana joined the United States the flow of silver specie from Mexico stopped, and money became scarce. People began to complain of hard times, and Governor Claiborne, to relieve the situation, established the Bank of Louisiana. It began on March 11, 1804, at 417 Royal Street, and was the first bank or financial institution in New Orleans and in the province. Among the currency that was issued, legend tells us, were ten-dollar notes printed on one side in English and on the other in French. On the French side was printed in large letters the French word for ten, "dix." The Creoles were suspicious of the new bank at first and would have nothing

to do with it; but not so the Americans. Never having had a stable currency, they immediately accepted the notes at their face value. But as coping with the subtleties of French pronunciation was never a general American accomplishment, the notes were referred to as "dixies," from the imprint on the reverse side; and New Orleans, whence they originated, was called the "land of the dixie." When Daniel Emmett's song *Dixieland* was accepted as the official Confederate war song the entire South became the "land of the dixie" or "Dixieland." Lo, another Frenchtown contribution to the curiosa of our country!

In a struggle between two such mighty and aggressive nations as England and France were during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries there could be but one outcome. One of them must eventually dominate. Peace, which came periodically, was usually but a temporary respite in which to lick wounds, recuperate, and maneuver for advantage for the next phase. When England and France were not actually in the shooting stage of a war they continued the conflict by invoking economic pressures and sanctions against one another. In the sparring for supremacy, one of England's acts to weaken Napoleon was to forbid all countries to trade with France. With her strong navy England was in a position to enforce this edict by patrolling the sea-lanes, but by these tactics she also ran the risk of offending neutral nations. The Americans were among the first to be so antagonized. The new country had tasted the rewards of world trade and was righteously resentful when the British, attempting to starve France into subjection, boarded, examined, and seized American shipping. It remembered old loyalties to France for her part in securing American independence, and old scores against the onetime mother country of Great Britain; and it was angered at the interference with its profitable and desirable trade. Incident followed incident until finally, six weeks after Louisiana became a State, the United States declared war on Great Britain. So began the War of 1812.

For nearly two years the conflict was fought on the high seas and in the North, and had little effect on the residents of Louisiana. Governor Claiborne was more concerned with the

P. L. Fourchy

Practices in all Courts

ATTORNEY & COUNSELLOR-AT-LAW

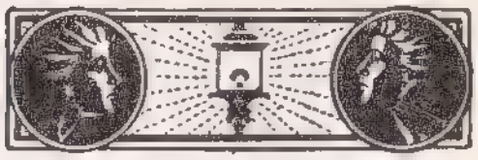
Residence, 1330 Hospital St.
Phone Hemlock 1293-L

Office Hours, 8 to 10 a. m
Phone 3585 3 to 4 p. m.

Office, 806 Gravier St.
Cor. Carondelet

New Orleans, La.

Attorney's ad in the "Blue Book."



Letter "N" (Colored)

Nash, Mamie	1530 Bienville
Newman, Jessie	1503 Conti
Nicholls, Margurite	218 N. Villere
Newman, Mary	235 N. Basin

Letter "P" (Colored)

Pullman, Vernell	1531 Iberville
Page, Estella	1515 Bienville
Perry, Alice	1515 Bienville
Porter, Sarah	1519 Bienville
Pierre, Josephine	1553 Bienville
Prant, Lan	1320 Conti
Pope, Marguerite	317 N. Basin
PIAZZA, WILLIE, Oct	317 N. Basin

Letter "R" (Colored)

Rainey, Minnie	1531 Iberville
Richardson, Lizzie	1410 Bienville
Raffins, Mamie	1404 Bienville
Robins, Mabell	1404 Bienville
Richardson, Violet	1555 Bienville
Russell, Florence	1509 Conti
Ramsey, Gertrude	1553 Conti

Individual listings in the "Blue Book."

A "Blue Book" display advertisement.

Miss May Evans

MISS EVANS is one woman among the fair sex who is regarded as an all round jolly good fe'low, and one who is always laughing and making all those around her do likewise.

While nothing is too good for May, she is admired and befriended by all who come in contact with her

"May" has the honor of keeping one of the quietest estblishments in the city, where beautiful women, good wine and sweet music reign supreme.

What more can a person expect? Just think of it! "Pretty women, wine and song."

In the palace of a King one could not expect more.

The signal of "May's" mansion is: "Let's all live and enjoy life while we can."

PHONE 1190 MAIN

A bordello boudoir from the "Blue Book

Arrow in the above drawing shows the suggested tour through the French Quarter to pass the most important landmarks of historical and general interest.

activities of a band of smugglers who were operating in the Gulf and secretly bringing their spoils into New Orleans than he was in the international situation.

These smugglers were based at Barataria Bay, about eighty miles south of New Orleans, where the bayous and islands provided a relatively safe refuge. Operating as privateers, they held letters of marque from the Republic of Cartagena, a colony of Spain which was in revolt against the mother country. These were legal only if ships of the enemy country were attacked and only if the seizure were properly approved in a port of the sponsoring nation. But the Baratarians conformed with no such niceties. They attacked, pillaged and destroyed ships of all countries, and they could not be bothered with the proprieties of taking their prizes to Cartagena for certification. Under these circumstances the contraband could not legally be brought into the United States, but huge quantities were surreptitiously smuggled into New Orleans, where they found an eager market. Some of the best people and business firms of the city were seduced by the low prices of the stolen and duty-free plunder, and a thriving business resulted. Merchants began to display the looted merchandise more or less openly, and a street in Frenchtown now bears the name "Pirates' Alley" because of the great number of illegal transactions said to have taken place there. As the traffic mushroomed it attracted to Barataria and New Orleans a motley of rough characters who were soon killing one another over the lush booty that continued to pour into the region. What was needed was a business manager, a coordinator or czar of the industry. Such a man appeared in the person of Jean Lafitte.

There is perhaps a no more romantic and controversial figure in the entire history of New Orleans than Lafitte. The subject of a vast literature, he has decisively been proved to have been thief, murderer, and all-round rogue. As many supporters as detractors have definitely established that he never was a pirate but a staunch patriot, a hero, a ladies' man, and a respectable merchant who operated strictly within the law. Impossible to sort fact from fiction, it cannot be denied that he added a flavorful spice to an already zestful period.

With his older brother Pierre, Jean Lafitte organized the

freebooters into an efficient business organization. He opened a blacksmith shop at the corner of St. Philip and Bourbon Streets as a blind. Leaving Pierre in New Orleans, Jean set up headquarters on Grand Isle at Barataria, and soon, assisted by a former artilleryman from Napoleon's army, Dominique You, was the unquestioned dictator of a flourishing industry.

Governor Claiborne tried to break up this unlawful trade, but it had grown so important both economically and politically that he made little progress. Smuggling was looked upon with the same divided opinion as bootlegging was during prohibition. Some defended the practice and others vigorously denounced it. The Governor issued a proclamation offering a reward of five hundred dollars for the delivery of Jean Lafitte to the city jail. Lafitte countered with posters put up in equally prominent places which offered fifteen thousand dollars for delivery of the Governor to Grand Isle, dead or alive. Such effrontery was too much even for New Orleans, so Claiborne declared the entire band to be outlaws and called upon all forces of the law to bring Lafitte to an accounting. Jean continued to elude capture, but his brother was not so alert. The authorities discovered that Pierre had become interested in an attractive young widow and they set a watch at her place. One night, as he furtively stepped from her doorway, he was seized and thrown into a cell in the Cabildo. A special Lafitte historical exhibit is still maintained there, showing the cell exactly as it was occupied by Pierre. Among documents and other items of interest pertaining to the illicit smuggling traffic can be seen the cutlasses of the Lafitte brothers, treasure chests, blunderbusses, telescopes, and sextants, that were used by the buccaneers.

About this time Great Britain and France agreed to another of their transitory truces, and England was then free to direct her entire attention to knocking out that upstart, the United States. Washington was raided and the Capitol and White House burned; after which they started planning to capture New Orleans, which was virtually unprotected. One day a British man-of-war sailed into Barataria Bay, and the commander attempted to enlist the aid of the smugglers against the United States. The buccaneer force by then consisted of over a thousand men and fifty ships. Lafitte was offered a Captaincy in

the British Navy and $30,000 in cash, besides the purchase price of the ships and other guarantees, if he would join the British. He pretended to consider the offer and asked for two weeks' time in which to make up his mind and put his affairs in order. As soon as the ship sailed, Lafitte sat down and wrote to an associate in New Orleans, Jean Blanque, who was then living at 409 Royal Street in the French Quarter, explaining what had occurred and enclosing the British documents as proof. He implored his friend to inform Governor Claiborne of the situation and to entreat him, as a reward, to release his brother, who had then been in prison for several months. He further offered the services of himself and his men and ships to the United States, provided a full pardon was granted all of them. Claiborne could not bargain with the outlaws openly, but a few days later Pierre escaped under conditions that appeared rather peculiar. Efforts to take Jean were not relaxed, however, and by this time the Federal Government had entered into the matter. Commodore Patterson of the United States Navy, at the head of a large expedition and acting under orders from Washington attacked the pirate stronghold and wiped it out; but again the wily Lafittes and their other leaders managed to escape.

The war was going badly for the United States. General Andrew Jackson had been placed in charge of the defense of the Gulf and was stationed at Mobile. Lafitte's letter had been the first indication that New Orleans was in danger of attack, and, upon being notified, Jackson came over to organize the defense of the city. In the meantime the British had dispatched a fleet of fifty ships and ten thousand veterans of the Napoleonic campaigns to Louisiana under Generals Pakenham and Gibbs. Within a week the British fleet was anchored off the coast. Jackson was informed of Lafitte's offer of ships and men and although he had previously denounced Lafitte and personally loathed the thought of associating with such ilk, he was desperate and was willing to consider any help he could get to strengthen the appalling weakness of the city's defenses. He sent word for Lafitte to meet him. Like the multitude of places that lay claim to fame because George Washington slept there, there are many claimants for honor in New Orleans as the

place where Jackson conferred with Lafitte and planned the battle of New Orleans. Chief among the contenders to which credence can reasonably be given are the Old Absinthe House, at 238 Bourbon Street, and Maspero's Exchange, on the corner of Chartres and St. Louis Streets. In any event, Jackson and Lafitte reached an agreement, and the entire Baratarian rabble joined the free Negroes, Choctaw Indians, and raw volunteers from Tennessee, Kentucky, and Mississippi that comprised Jackson's army. As strange a force as ever assembled, undisciplined and untrained, in all less than five thousand, this raw-boned army was expected to withstand the assault of twice their number of campaign-seasoned highly trained conquest-hungry British troops.

After two months of preliminary skirmishing and minor engagements the epochal Battle of New Orleans began, about four miles outside of the city, on January 8, 1815. The unorthodox warfare of the Baratarians, the Indians, and the "dirty shirts," as the British called the mountaineers, completely baffled and overwhelmed the British. Hostilities kept up until January 17, when the English, with staggering losses, retired to their ships in complete defeat. The fact that the war had been over for over three weeks, having been concluded overseas by the Treaty of Ghent on December 24, 1814, did nothing to detract from the glory of the accomplishment. It is regrettable that many brave men gave their lives not knowing that their sacrifice had been unnecessary. Had there been radio or telegraph then, those lives might have been spared.

Riding at the head of the defenders, Jackson marched triumphantly into New Orleans, where he was hailed as a savoir. The Governor declared a day of thanksgiving, and an impressive ceremony was given in honor of Jackson in the Place d'Armes, the square that was later to bear his name. Upon General Jackson's recommendation, President Madison granted full pardon to all the privateers who could prove that they had taken part in the engagement. This ended the piratical career of most of the the freebooters, but Lafitte, unable to adjust himself to an orderly life continued his questionable pursuits for some years afterwards. He ended in an obscure grave, whereabouts unknown.

A beautiful Tidewater country seat typical of those in the east of post old mill-

of hundreds of examples of unusual iron work in Frenchtown.

Not everyone worshipped Jackson. Despite rumors that peace had been declared the General kept the city under martial law, much to the annoyance and resentment of the Creoles. A newspaper article was published bitterly denouncing and criticizing Jackson. He had the writer arrested and put in jail. United States District Court Justice Dominick Hall released the author, whereupon Jackson banished the judge from the city. When official news of peace did come the General put an end to martial law, and Judge Hall returned to the city. He immediately opened court, summoned Jackson to appear before him, found the General guilty of contempt of court, and assessed a fine of a thousand dollars against the victor of New Orleans. This action aroused those who realized and appreciated what the General had done for the city, and a mob formed at Maspero's Coffee Shop at Chartres and St. Louis Streets, which Jackson frequented. The people took up a collection that quickly reached a thousand dollars and tried to pay the future President's fine. Thanking the crowd, Jackson refused the money and requested that it be given to the dependents of the men lost in the Battle of New Orleans.

After the battle Jackson had highly commended Lafitte's most celebrated lieutenant, Dominique You, on his valor and conduct during the conflict. Dominique felt that he had had enough excitement in his lifetime and he proceeded to settle down and live the life of a gentleman, but his name was destined to be associated with at least one more adventure before his death. Napoleon had many supporters in New Orleans to whom the vision of their idol pining and grieving himself into a premature old age at St. Helena brought great compassion. Sympathizers started a movement to provide a sanctuary in New Orleans where the Little Corporal could be safe and enjoy his remaining days. According to tradition, this movement was headed by no less a dignitary than Nicolas Girod, Mayor of New Orleans from 1812 to 1815, who is supposed to have built a sumptuously furnished mansion where the former Emperor could repose. Two venerable edifices claim the distinction of being the "Napoleon House," one at 514 Chartres Street, and the other, more likely genuine, at 500 Chartres Street, at the corner of St. Louis. The tale meets harmony

with fact here, for this house is definitely known to have been owned by Girod at the time. Enthusiastic tellers go so far as to state that Napoleon actually was rescued from St. Helena, brought to the city, lived in this mansion, and upon his death was buried in New Orleans. Another legend states that he was rescued but was wounded in the escape and that he died on the way to New Orleans and his body was placed in a cask of rum for preservation. Napoleon tales abound in Nouvelle Orléans.

Girod and his associates raised a large sum of money and purchased the *Seraphine,* a schooner of two hundred tons with the reputation of being one of the fastest ships in the world. Dominique You was engaged as Captain and in turn hired as his crew the most capable of his former Baratarian sailors. It was planned to free Napoleon from St. Helena, peacefully if possible, but if not—the *Seraphine* was well equipped with speed, men, and armament to accomplish her mission by any means. Unfortunately, for the story at least, a week before the schooner was to sail word reached New Orleans that Napoleon had died in his prison cell on May 5, 1821.

But proceeding from what may have been to what is actual fact, the physician who attended Napoleon on his deathbed, Dr. Francisco Antommarchi, did come to New Orleans after the Emperor's death. The doctor opened up an office in what was then the Old Cosmopolitan Hotel, now the St. Regis Restaurant at 121 Royal Street. Here the doctor established a consulting practice and displayed the death mask of Napoleon he had made at the monarch's death, a bronze copy of which may be seen in the museum of the Cabildo. Dr. Antommarchi also opened a treatment room in the Girod home, where he administered to the poor without charge. This may have had supreme significance—or none at all.

Paving was started in New Orleans in 1820. Royal Street, being the most important thoroughfare in the city was first. Granite blocks brought over from Belgium were laid, it is said, at the cost of a dollar a block. Over on Chartres Street, implements of justice in the form of stocks were lined along the banquettes facing the Cabildo. Here the guilty were punished by having head and arms secured so that they became targets

for abuse and overripe fruits and vegetables from the idlers of the Public Square. Each miscreant wore a placard announcing to anyone interested the nature and details of the crime for which he was under duress. Farther back in the square a large wooden gallows stood stark and terrible as a raw reminder of retribution. Punishment by pillory was abolished for whites in 1827, but it was continued for Negroes until 1847. Curfews were sounded nightly at eight and nine o'clock to warn residents and sailors abroad without permits to return to their homes or ships. A special pass issued by a respected merchant or employer was required by anyone desiring to be out after curfew.

Although the lighting system of Carondelet's days, consisting of a few fish-oil lamps, was greatly enlarged upon, the custom of carrying a lantern when going about on the streets after dark continued until 1840. Gas, manufactured by a machine, was introduced into New Orleans in 1823, providing illumination for a theatre but only on an experimental basis. Home lighting, except for a few oil lamps, was furnished as it had been for a hundred years by wax candles. The wax for these was obtained by boiling seeds and stalks of wax myrtle or myrtleberry, which was raised throughout the colony for that purpose. The wax coming to the top of the water was skimmed off, cleaned, bleached, and then made into candles.

It was now well into the nineteenth century.

6

CAFE AU LAIT

New Orleans was entering a period of almost unbroken tranquillity, prosperity, and commercial expansion that lasted until the Civil War. At the same time, social developments were under way that produced conditions and situations existing no place else in the world. From its enception New Orleans had been a town of earthiness. A great many of its original settlers were recruited from the jails of Paris, and the women who accompanied them were rounded up from the streets and bordellos. Existing from the very beginning of the colony, the commerce of sex received the first official attention as early as 1751, when the Government issued orders designed to limit the spread of the traffic. The first action against immoral establishments was taken in 1817 by the City Council, when a woman caught plying her trade and her business agent were fined for disturbing the peace and creating a scandal. Gambling establishments were running openly and were frequented by the finest people of the town. The dominating vice of the Creoles over the years was their passion for gambling, which resulted in continual friction between the authorities and citizens.

From Bienville's time slavery flourished or languished according to the needs for labor. The Negro population grew with the white but in between there existed and kept pace another group as clearly defined and as separate as the white and the Negro. In early New Orleans the pure blooded African

was never referred to as colored, always as Negro. The colored, or *gens de couleur*, made up the separate group, and were the Negroes with white blood. Even though it be thinly diluted, a member of this class considered himself superior to the Negro and even supported a caste within a caste. The griffe, an offspring of a mulatto and a Negro, looked down upon the Negro; the mulatto snubbed the griffe and in turn was scorned by the quadroon. The octoroon, the aristocrat of them all because nearest to being all white and yet recognizable as colored, was aloof to all the others. These people were all free and the class existed from the beginning of the colony. It is said to have started from the mulatto offspring of slave women and white men when there were no white women in the colony. The stock was replenished by the issue from slave girls and the young sons of rich men whose fathers set them to learning the facts of life in the *garconnière* at the rear of their homes. In both cases the owners gave mothers and progeny their freedom. In New Orleans the term "quadroon" is loosely used to refer to a multitude of combinations. A quadroon is one part black and three parts white but, can be as little as one sixty-fourth black.

These free people maintained their own society and grew in numbers and importance throughout the Spanish regime. Some became wealthy, acquiring plantations and having slaves of their own. Many of the children were sent abroad to be educated and became accomplished in scientific, literary, and artistic pursuits. And the best physical characteristics of both races seemed to come to the fore, particularly in the women, who became famous for their striking beauty. On-the-spot reporters of the time describe the quadroon women as "the most beautiful women on earth" and as having "lovely countenances, full, dark, liquid eyes, lips of coral, teeth of pearl, sylphlike figures; their beautifully rounded limbs, exquisite gait, and ease of manner might furnish a model for a Venus." These gorgeous creatures were not long undetected by the young blades of the town, who attempted to pay them court; but the Spanish authorities permitted no open franternization. As soon as the colony came under the United States, however, there was a change in attitude and an acceptance of a strange

situation. No longer was any social stigma attached to a white man who consorted with a quadroon. Rather it became the thing to do, providing he could afford it. Having a quadroon mistress was as much a mark of prestige and distinction as owning fine horses and carriages. And there was only one limit to the degree of association. It could be brief or permanent, superficial or serious—but never any wedding.

Mothers brought up their daughters for one thing—to become mistresses of white men, preferably rich ones. The young maidens were drilled in homemaking, how to attract a man, how to win him, and how to keep him. They were taught to beguile and soothe, to entice and charm, to invite—and gratify. This specialized training in the art of allure began in early life and continued until the mother felt her fledgling was ready to be launched. Then the girl was placed on the market, subtly displaying her wares in the hopes of being bargained for by an acceptable bidder. Or, in nicer words, to make her debut into society, which was done at one of the Quadroon Balls, or *Bals du Cordon Blue*, for which New Orleans was famous—or infamous.

These affairs were given in two or three locations over the course of many years. The one most generally associated with the Quadroon Balls is the Orleans Ballroom, at 717 Orleans Street, regarded at the time as the finest ballroom in the United States. The balls were gay, lavish, and fabulous, but highly decorous affairs, the most celebrated of all the entertainments of early New Orleans. Attendance was limited strictly to the quadroon girls and their mothers, and to white gentlemen of means and social standing who were admitted only by invitation. The purpose of these affairs was to permit the white men to make a selection. In reality the balls were merely glorified slave-marts. Tall, elegant, of olive color and smooth-skinned by nature, and beautifully gowned, scented, and coiffed by deliberate design, the quadroons were the ultimate in appeal. If one of these girls struck a man's fancy he presented himself to her mother, discussed financial arrangements, and if found satisfactory was permitted to pay court to her. If she accepted him as a lover he established a home for her in one of the little white houses on Rampart Street with the understanding

The Old Cosmopolitan Hotel, a popular hostelry of the "gay scene."

lass meeting at the corner of Royal and Canal Streets on September 14, 1874.

General A.S. Badger in front of the Gem Saloon on Royal Street.

Briquettes entre poteaux construction of the Lafitte Blacksmith Shop. Plaster has fallen away exposing the internal construction.

that he could come and go as he liked. To the girls this arrangement was regarded in the same light as marriage. Seldom was the *placée*, as she was called, unfaithful to her beau. Her interest, identical with that of her white competitor, was to hold her lover and insure her security for as long as possible. Only the *placée* had to do it without the help of marriage or the law.

This arrangement lasted as long as the man wished it to, and if there were any children they were given his name. If he decided to marry someone of his own class he merely broke off the arrangement and was free to leave. Or, as some did, he simply continued the association and maintained two addresses. And some really loved their quadroon mates and never married at all.

These quadroons were not prostitutes; call them career girls, or what you will. The high morality with which they regarded and maintained their unmoral position is amazing. This phase of civic adolescence, impossible of occurance at any other time and place, began to wane after 1850 as the city became Americanized. By the time of the War Between the States it had worn itself out.

The conditions under which it was possible for a phenomenon such as the quadroon to flourish bred yet another custom that, although prevailing elsewhere, never reached the ludicrous extremes that it did in New Orleans. Hot-blooded and high-strung, the fiery young Creoles took offense for the most absurd reasons. Honor was their deity. The slightest rudeness, an insignificant breach of etiquette, or the merest suspicion of unfair dealing became the cause for an argument. Frequently the basis for a quarrel was imaginary and ridiculous; but once it started, satisfaction had to be given and none dared refuse. The defense of *honneur* assumed the same importance in the lives of the Creoles as the pursuit of *amour*. It was beneath the dignity of a gentlemen to strike another, and all misunderstandings had to be resolved by a duel.

Duelling was engaged in secretly in Bienville's time and continued on a small scale until about 1830, when it reached its heyday. Weapons were the rapier, the small-sword, and the cane sword or *colichemard*. No Creole gentleman would dream

of attending a social function without his blade any more than he would appear without his lace-trimmed kerchief or his pants. More duels were originated at and as a result of the Quadroon Balls than for any other reason, for the Creole was touchier about his colored mistress than about anything else. The Creoles fought over everything, but especially they fought over their quadroons. It is said that they were quicker to rise for their tawny sweethearts than for a wife, fiancée, or sister. Many of the marble slabs in the Old St. Louis Cemetery bearing the legend "fell in a duel" shield the error in judgment of tenants who cast amatory glances in the wrong direction.

All contests were strictly governed by the precepts of a rule book called the "Code of Honor." Many of the controversies required several days of preparation, but often arrangements could be made quickly and the matter settled without delay. Frequently, in arguments occurring at the Quadroon Balls on Orleans Street, the principals accompanied by seconds and supported by a referee and a doctor, if available, repaired across the street to St. Anthony's Garden in the rear of the St. Louis Cathedral. Here, concealed by a heavy growth of shrubbery, the affair could be resolved at once. Satisfaction was had and the episode considered closed at the first drop of blood; but if the occasion seemed to call for it the bout could continue until one of the contestants was killed. Duelling became so general at the height of its indulgence that there was scarcely a man in the city who had not fought at least one duel, and the more active had engaged in several.

With the almost universal espousal of the duello in New Orleans a new profession appeared. Fencing academies were opened by skilled duelling masters to school the young bloods of the town in the finer nuances of mayhem and murder. The most famous of these "academies" were located on Exchange Alley, a short and narrow street running between Royal and Chartres Streets. In a class by themselves, these experts were aped and adulated by the crowd in much the same manner that our movie stars are worshipped today. Some of the fencing masters affected fine manners and dressed expensively to attract attention to themselves and their services, and several attempted to get a foothold in society. Few were successful

in this, however, for while the aristocrats fraternized with their instructors in the academies and in the coffee houses they did not bring them into their homes. More than one of the *maître d'armes* earned a reputation as a lover, and others distinguished themselves in different ways. At one time there were as many as fifty skilled teachers of the duello in New Orleans.

Because of the unique qualifications of these masters and the need for their services, the usually impassable color line was occasionally disregarded in associating with them. Such was the case with Bastile Croquère, a mulatto, who is said to have been one of the handsomest men in New Orleans. He was a spectacular fop, habitually seen about the city dressed in specially designed and picturesque raiment. One such outfit consisted of a bright green broadcloth coat cut in at the waist, with high rolled collar and tails under which could be seen spotless linen. Around his neck was a black silk cravat, tied into a bow in front. Skin-tight yellow trousers strapped under the instep of high-heeled boots completed the ensemble. A scented handkerchief and a cameo bracelet were added for effect. Despite this incongruous and effeminate appearance, Croquère was a sensational swordsman and such an excellent instructor that the leading Creoles came to him for lessons. He was in such demand that it was difficult to get an appointment with him, and his *salle d'armes* was always crowded.

In a field of experts, Gilbert Rosière, a native of Bordeaux and a university graduate and lawyer, is ranked close to the top. Coming to New Orleans from Spain to try his hand at the bar, he fell in with a gay set and soon lost interest in the law. Described as gay, witty, and charming, although endowed with an ungovernable temper, he became a fencing master and prospered. Called "Titi" by his worshipping pupils, he made a fortune but did not know how to keep it, and before long he was broke. Probably the most famous swordsman in New Orleans, he made his start toward fame in his early career by fighting seven duels in one week, in all of which he killed his adversary. For all his bloodthirstiness he was known to have been extremely gentle-hearted and a lover of the arts.

On one occasion, in a particularly heavy scene at the opera,

Rosière became so affected by the drama that tears came to his eyes. A man sitting nearby thought this very funny and started to laugh. Whether he recognized the great duellist or not the records do not say, but Rosière, noting that he was the object of the man's derision, stood up and faced him. "It is true I weep," said the master, controlling himself with a great effort, "but I also fight." With that Rosière challenged him and left the theatre.

The next morning the offending gentlemen learned not to be so quick to laugh at his betters. Rosière did not kill him, but led him on, teasing him by keeping just out of range of the other's sword. When the man was completely worn out and ready to drop, Rosière ended the affair by aloofly flicking the blade from his detractor's hand and slowly and deliberately walking away.

Acknowledged to be the finest all-round swordsman of the New Orleans duelling fraternity, and perhaps of the entire world, was Pepe Llula, a Spaniard. Dark, suave and handsome, as it seemed fencing masters were expected to be, Pepe was also highly skilled with the pistol. Just for practice, and when there were spectators around to make it interesting, Llula used to put eggs on the head of his small son and crack their shells with a bullet from thirty paces. At one time in his career he bought the cemetery where he now sleeps alongside the many victims he sent there ahead of him.

The early records of New Orleans duelling days over a long period of years tell of many strange contests, some pathetic, some commonplace, mostly tragic, all ridiculous and unnecessary, and occasionally some humorous. One that might have ended tragically but which turned out to be comic was between two lawmakers of early Frenchtown.

Bernard Marigny was the scion of the richest family in New Orleans, and was to become the richest man in the entire United States. He was the country's first playboy and introduced to America the now-popular game of craps. When a young man he was the most successful duellist of his day. He was also a gay young swain with the ladies. It is said that he fought a duel every week over a period of several years and was never defeated. His conquests over man and fair maiden ran into the

The home of Judah P. Benjamin, confederate Secretary of War and State. From the covered arbors and by a ribbon tied on the balcony railing and the outrigger boat a regatta in the background. 527 Bourbon Street.

The Old Absinthe House, the oldest continuous dispensary of absinthe in North America. Over a century and a half old, some are said to owe to owners in Spain.

hundreds. He and six other gay young squires were paying court to the beautiful daughter of an aristocratic Creole. The competition for her hand was about even, which Marigny, reared in the lap of luxury and accustomed to having his own way, could not endure. He challenged all six to a duel, and they, being gentlemen, could not refuse. One moonlight evening in St. Anthony's Garden the young Marigny dispatched his rivals one by one. This cleared the way for him to pay court to his beloved without interference.

Marigny was sent to the Legislature in 1817, when there was strong political antagonism between the Creoles and the Americans, the cause of many warm debates in the House of Representatives and the Senate. Catahoula Parish was represented by a Georgian giant, an ex-blacksmith named Humble, a man of plain ways, but possessed of many remarkable qualities. He was distinguished as much for his immense stature as for his political acumen, standing nearly seven feet in his stockings. It happened that an impassioned speech of Monsieur Marigny was replied to by the Georgian, and the latter was so extremely pointed in his allusions that his opponent felt himself aggrieved. He issued a challenge to mortal combat. The Georgian was non-plussed. "I know nothing of this duelling business," said he. "I will not fight him."

"You must," said his friends. "No gentlemen can refuse."

"I am not a gentleman," replied the honest son of Georgia. "I am only a blacksmith."

"But you will be ruined if you do not fight," urged his friends. "You have the choice of weapons, and you can choose in such a manner as to give yourself an equal chance against your adversary."

The giant asked for time to consider the proposition and ended by accepting. He sent the following reply to Monsieur Marigny:

"I accept, and in the exercise of my privilege I stipulate that the duel shall take place in Lake Pontchartrain in six feet of water, sledge-hammers to be used as weapons."

Monsieur Marigny was about five feet eight inches in height, and against an adversary who was nearly seven feet tall there could be but one outcome. Marigny had met his master, and

recognizing the blacksmith's wit and ingenuity he declared himself satisfied and the duel did not take place.

The newspapers of the time tell hundreds of stories of horrible death on the duelling ground. They became more violent as time went on. What was more or less of a gentlemanly sport to the Creoles was a deadly serious business to the American element. The only reason they could see to hold a duel was to kill somebody, and when they had the choice of weapons they selected pistols or shotguns with slugs. This direct approach frequently found both parties to an altercation on the losing end. There was no future in such a sport the way the forthright Americans played it.

The Civil War took most of the fencing masters and practically all of their pupils into the Confederate Army. Those who returned home found that duelling had no place amid the problems of Reconstruction, and another hue of the New Orleans kaleidoscope passed into history.

7

O FLESH, FAREWELL

Mention New Orleans to the average person and quickly ask him to say the first thing that comes into his mind. Without fail or hesitation he will come back with "Mardi Gras." Like butter and bread, June and moon, everybody associates New Orleans with Mardi Gras. Yet, only a very few outside of the city have but the faintest idea what Mardi Gras is all about.

Mardi Gras is not a parade, or celebration of some sort, where people dress up in outlandish fashion and carry on with reckless abandon. Of course, it is that too. You do see people, with faces masked, parading the streets, throwing confetti, blowing whistles, and tooting horns. And the processions given in New Orleans can be seen nowhere else on earth. But this is the superficial part of Mardi Gras, the part that the tourist sees. To the native of New Orleans a serious meaning underlies all this, a deep social significance. It is a tremendously important part of the lives of the people of that community.

Mardi Gras is merely a day, the end of the Carnival season. Carnival is a period of celebration and jollity. It starts each year in New Orleans on Epiphany, the sixth of January, with the Ball of the Twelfth Night Revelers. This is in observance of the pilgrimage of the three wise men who followed the Eastern Star after the first Christmas to reach the manger where Christ was born. There may be an affair or two before January sixth during the Christmas season, but these are merely

a nod to the visitors who are in the city for the New Year festivities. The Ball of the Twelfth Night Revelers is the official start of the Carnival and launches a series of balls and a period of merriment that continues until Lent begins. Mardi Gras is Shrove Tuesday, the day before the beginning of Lent, and the last day of Carnival. At the stroke of midnight on Mardi Gras, everything ceases, and Lent begins with the first moment of Ash Wednesday. Morning comes, and those who are able go to church, supposedly in sackcloth and ashes, to prepare themselves for the vigorous restraints of the Lenten season, which is in striking contrast to the pleasures, indulgences, and frivolities of the Carnival. Predominately Catholic from its early settlement, New Orleans' people have been imbued with the spirit of Carnival since their ancient primal origins. It is in their beings, their blood lines, their heritage.

The origin and literal meaning of both Carnival and Mardi Gras have been dulled in the passage of time and are hopelessly in dispute. As sensible a derivation as can be found for "Carnival" appears to be from the medieval Latin *carne vale* and the French *carnevale,* which mean, as nearly as they can be translated, "O flesh, farewell!" This is not definitive; it is merely indicative. It gives to the apparent period of indulgence a deeper significance as the time of preparation for later repression. Mardi Gras is French for "Fat Tuesday," which, if the imagination be stretched, implies that it is the day when one lives off the fat of the land. When we permit ourselves to be liberal and accept as a broad translation "Tuesday on which meat may be eaten," we come to the true meaning of Mardi Gras.

Carnival, a springtime holiday dating far back into ancient times, was fundamentally religious in character. Ovid writes of a Greek shepherd race that celebrated a spring festival five thousand years ago, on the date corresponding with the middle of February. Ancient peoples were completely dependent upon the elements for their well-being. If the season was good and their crops grew, they were well and happy. If nature was unkind and insects, bad weather, and poor growing conditions beset them, they suffered and died. Each spring, therefore, they did what they could to insure favorable fortune. Appeals

Royal Street from Iberville. This has been the main street of Pensacola for over two hundred years. Note the narrow width of only 38 feet.

were made to various deities for better growing conditions, fertility of the soil, and the remission of sin. Rites were indulged in that were expected to purify the soul and make women fertile and fruitful. These lustral ceremonies were passed on in the course of time to other races and countries. The Romans carried on with the earlier Greek rituals and added some of their own, including the Lupercalia, a ceremony performed on the fifteenth of February. This observance began with the slaughtering of a sacrificial goat, from whose skin the priests of Faunus fashioned thongs. With these the priests passed among the women, striking them upon their backs. This was supposed to insure fertility and easy delivery.

Some time later, dogs were sacrificed in the place of goats, in the belief that they had even greater powers of purification and mitigation. The religious significance of the Lupercalia began to wane after a period of several centuries, and the vernal festivities turned into periods of debauchery and licentiousness known as Bacchanalia. The church was scandalized by the performances of the people and attempted to stamp out the carnal practices. But force proved unsuccessful, so other means of coping with the situation had to be adopted. The spirit of compromise and adjustment which has so generally characterized the dealings of the church with the world at large showed itself in its handling of the prevailing festivities. The primitive church, thwarted in its attempts to crush the celebrations that were such a part of the national life, assigned to the pagan rites a Christian meaning and, by so doing regained its position of leadership over the masses. To the festival the priests gave the name *carnelevamen*, which over a period of several hundred years has come down to us as Carnival. No sharp differences can be shown between pagan rites and Christian ceremonies today—believe it or not.

As the custom of Carnival passed on through the years, each province or race added some particular detail. These innovations have become a part of Carnival and are reflected in its modern New Orleans observance. France substituted the bull as the sacrificial animal in place of the goat, and as "Boeuf-Gras" he has remained to this day one of the favorite and best loved symbols of the New Orleans fete. New Orleans just

could not have a Mardi Gras without a sacrificial *Boeuf-Gras* appearing somewhere. Early England, relaxing during the period of Carnival from the strictness of her real sovereign, was said to be under the reign of Rex, Lord of Misrule, who issued special proclamations for the occasion. Rex appears with each Mardi Gras in New Orleans and has become one of the highlights of the modern celebrations. In France the Carnival was opened by the Bean King, an agricultural symbol, who presided over the realm during the period of festivity. At the beginning of the Ball of the Twelfth Night Revelers in New Orleans, a large cake is cut, and the lovely debutantes pass by, each receiving a portion. The King selects as his Queen the lucky lady who finds the golden bean in her piece of cake. Those finding silver beans become maids of honor to the Queen. Other societies select their Queens and attendants differently.

Strangely enough, New Orleans' biggest business is not a project of, and is only to a minor degree with the benefit of the Chamber of Commerce. Of course merchants, opportunists that they are, offer no objections to the windfall that comes their way without cost or effort. Almost the entire expenses of Carnival and Mardi Gras are borne by members of various groups, known as Krewes, Orders, Knights, Prophets, etc. These groups have a secret membership, and no-one knows of their activities except the members themselves. The membership of these groups is entirely male, except for one or two recent organizations who have entered the picture with an all-female membership. The male organizations are made up of the prominent citizens and the more important businessmen of the city. The Creoles and the damn-Yankees, who by now have made good and become respected in the city, join forces to make up the most colorful and dazzling Carnival known to the world.

It is a profound honor to be a member of one of these groups, which vie with one another in the manner of college fraternities to establish prestige and distinction. Membership is voted upon, and those undesirable are blackballed as ruthlessly as in select private clubs, which is what they are. While there are individual variations, the general plan of all of the

groups is similar. Each association is headed by a prominent member called the Captain, elected to this position because of his capabilities and leadership. This position entails innumerable responsibilities, and the law of the Captain is absolute. He receives nothing for his work except the satisfaction of a job well done and the appreciation of his fellow members. Each society has a King and a court, but these positions are for the benefit of the ceremonies and are not administrative. There are twoscore or more of these associations that give balls during the Carnival season. At each ball tableaux are given, based on legendary, historical, or mythical themes.

When Carnival time approaches, all New Orleans becomes tense. Each mother of a comely daughter of adolescent age fondly hopes that her offspring will be one of those selected as the Queen of a ball. For each affair must have an honorary Queen. As there can be but one Queen for each ball, the honor of being selected as an attendant is almost as desirable. Each young maiden's heart flutters in eager anticipation, for it is at the various balls that the young ladies make their debuts, provided they are invited. This is New Orleans' original way of launching her debutantes into society. In no place in the world do young ladies learn court procedures as they do here. Mothers train their daughters in this from childhood in anticipation of their being selected as the Queen of some court, or even perhaps as the most coveted of all, the Queen of Carnival. The simulated court ceremonies at the various balls are completely authentic and are performed in as serious a manner as in the old Bourbon and Castilian courts. Many a father has saved for a lifetime to be prepared for the occasion when his daughter is selected, for the Queen and her attendants must provide their own gowns, which are georgeous and expensive. After a maiden has been notified that she is to be Queen, fervent rehearsals ensue, for the Queen has the leading role in the tableau and must be ever proper—she dare not err. The notification of her selection and the rehearsals are confidential and are held in the deepest secrecy.

Formerly the important Carnival balls were held in the Old French Opera House, on Bourbon and Toulouse Streets in the French Quarter. But this venerable institution was destroyed

by fire in 1919, and the balls are now given in the spacious and modern Municipal Auditorium located at Beauregard Square (formerly known as Congo Square), where slaves danced a century ago.

The ablest historians and investigators are unable to agree upon the dates and the manner in which the spectacular Carnival was started in New Orleans. One tale relates that no sooner was the city founded under Bienville in 1718 than an impromptu Mardi Gras celebration was held by the colonists. It is a fact, however, that the day in 1699 when Bienville and his brother Iberville entered the Mississippi, then known as the St. Louis River, it was Shrove Tuesday, and Mardi Gras was being celebrated in France. Very appropriately, the brothers dropped anchor in a cove twelve miles from the mouth of the river and celebrated the occasion, naming the place Mardi Gras Bayou. It appears on old maps as Mardi Gras Gut.

Introduced by the Jesuit missionaries, crops of figs, oranges, indigo, and sugar-cane grew plentifully in the new country, and the landed gentry prospered. But the schools were inadequate, and the sons were shipped off to Paris for their education. Returning with all the traditions and customs of the old country that they had been trained to accept, they kept the spirit of Carnival alive in the new country. It is a tradition of the Creoles that Carnival with formal balls has been held since New Orleans was founded. It was continued under the Spanish, but the Governors prohibited street masking because of outbursts of rowdyism. Street masking came back during the American domination.

On January 10, 1857, an event occurred that was to have a great effect on Carnival procedures. A group of New Orleans businessmen met in the upstairs rooms of the Old Gem Saloon on 127 Royal Street and organized a secret club called the Mystick Krewe of Comus, named after the Greek god of festive joy and mirth. The Mystick Krewe has become the aristocrat of all the fine Carnival organizations, and no greater honor can come to a New Orleans maid than to be selected as the Queen of Comus.

To the Mystick Krewe goes the credit for bringing Carnival and Mardi Gras to the people. This society started the custom

Mafia murder occurred early in the century.

The gate-anchor and wrought iron gates in the courtyard of the present Public Burial. Through this passage went the grand cortèges of earlier days with their aristocratic Creole passengers. Note the "ollas" and the old drainage ditch.

of organized street parades. Comus climaxes the Carnival season by holding the most expensive, the most imaginative, and the most glamorous night parade, just before their ball on Mardi Gras evening. Other organizations founded later followed the lead of Comus and also have street parades, after which they have their ball. The parades start on Thursday, six days before Mardi Gras, and this is the part of Carnival and Mardi Gras that is available to the public. It is the greatest free show on earth, open to everybody; but no amount of money can get one into the private balls if his presence is not wanted.

The parades are fantastic, extravagant affairs, and, like the balls, are entirely financed by the individual societies that give them. The funds come entirely from the membership dues, no benefit performances are held, no advertising is sold, and no public subscriptions are asked. The average parade costs around fifty thousand dollars and takes two or three hours. Parades are made up of about twenty floats, mule-drawn to comply with an ancient custom, mounted on wheeled flat-cars about twenty feet long and eight feet wide. The theme of the parade is the same as that of the ball of the society later, and it is not announced until the procession begins. After a brief flash of elegance and ostentation in the parade, and then again at the tableau of the ball, the floats are never used again.

The night parades start at seven o'clock and are much more expensive and impressive than the daytime ones. Striking features of the evening pageant are the fantastic, flickering, flambeaux that provide an eerie character to the scene. These are flaming four-burner gasoline torches, carried on the ends of poles by about five hundred sturdy black-robed and scarlet masked Negroes. The flambeaux are heavy and difficult to carry, but the dark boys a-totin' 'em don't object, for they are having themselves a time—truckin' on down the avenue—sharing the white man's felicity. In the vanguard of the procession are mounted police, followed by a company on foot, and then by a float with the Captain of the society and his aides masked and costumed in the theme of the day. Then comes the King's float, the title float, and other floats interpreting the theme of the pageant. Interspersed freely between

the floats are numerous bands that keep the affair joyful with continuous music. The later floats are manned by the members of the society, also masked and appropriately costumed, who throw little trinkets to the crowds lining the streets. It is believed in New Orleans that he who catches a souvenir from the floats will be assured of good luck, at least until the next Carnival. This is a far cry from the days of about a hundred years back, when rowdies threw dust, flour, and lime on passers-by, a practice that put Mardi Gras in disrepute.

The parades commence on St. Charles Street, in the lovely garden district of the modern city, and proceed thence to Canal Street, one of the widest and most brightly lighted streets in the whole world, which gets its name from the fact that it formerly was a canal intended to connect the Mississippi with Lake Pontchartrain. After meeting their Queens along the way with fitting ceremony, the processions come into Frenchtown at Royal Street and proceed up Orleans Street, ending up at the Municipal Auditorium for the ball, the climax of the occasion.

Parades can be seen from balconies, windows of houses, tops of cars, and from specially built tiers along the way. But to feel the real spirit of Carnival, one must mingle with the crowd, preferably in costume and mask, jostling with them and perhaps carrying a balloon or eating a hot dog purchased from the ubiquitous vendors who spring up with Carnival.

Probably second to Comus in glamor and showmanship is Rex, King of Carnival and the Lord of Misrule, who formerly appeared in New Orleans Harbor by ship on the day before Mardi Gras. Rex calls himself King of Carnival, but he is a usurper in this position, actually being only the King of the society that spawned him. The first appearance of this royal personage was in 1872, when he was conceived in order to honor Grand Duke Alexis Romanoff Alexandrovich, brother of the heir apparent to the Russian throne. The Grand Duke was making a tour of the United States, and each city he visited tried to outdo the previous one in lavish entertainment. It had been a triumphal excursion, and word came to New Orleans of the Grand Duke's anticipation of his visit to the City that Care Forgot. But New Orleans, staggering under carpetbag rule,

had made no plans to honor the imperial guest. Twelve days before the Duke's arrival nothing had been done.

Suddenly something happened. The Mayor received a letter of supplication signed by one "Rex," calling the magistrate's attention to conditions and requesting authority to do something. This was immediately granted, and there was no further show of humility—there was action. An organization of forty members was formed that immediately issued proclamations and decrees in the name of "Rex," directing what everybody should do. It was a hasty and tardy attempt, but it worked, and when the Grand Duke arrived he was given the royal reception to which his exalted position entitled him. New Orleans was left with a new Carnival organization and new traditions.

The modern Rex issues his manifestos *pro bono publico,* as in days past, but he no longer arrives by water. The parade of Rex is a daytime affair and now takes place on Mardi Gras. Rex is the only society King who rides in the parade unmasked, for there is no secret as to who he is. His name has been announced, but his makeup is so theatrical that he is hardly recognizable. The high point of Carnival comes at midnight on Mardi Gras, just before Lent starts, when Rex and his retinue visit the court of the Mystick Krewe. In this final grand march of the season, the two most prodigal monarchs and the beauty of their chosen consorts join in a scene which becomes the apogee of New Orleans social life.

Carnival is kind, Carnival is generous, Carnival is democratic. While Rex misrules on Mardi Gras, believing that he alone is supreme and exercises absolute dominion over New Orleans, another monarch challenges the authority of the King of Carnival. Aping Rex in his assumption of power, King Zulu in another part of the city holds full sway over a realm within a realm. Wearing a grass skirt and a gold crown made from a gasoline can, his body encased in black tights, painted with red and green stripes, and with tufts of dried grass at ankles, wrists, and throat, Zulu arrives aboard his yacht from the land of the blacks. As if nature had not endowed him sufficiently, his face is further blackened, and the eyes and mouth enlarged with white circles. Seated on his Morris chair throne,

waving a broomstick scepter with white rooster feather, and flanked by painted henchmen wearing police uniforms with huge badges, Zulu is every inch a king, a Gilbert and Sullivan sovereign in absolute ludricrous pomposity. The throne is shaded with a burlap canopy, the yacht is a decrepit tugboat, and the port of conquest is the New Basin Canal. For imagination, burlesque, and color (and no pun is intended) there is no Carnival feature that can approach that of the reign of the Zulu King.

Transferred to the royal fleet, a King on Mardi Gras, perhaps a truck driver the next day, Zulu begins his parade accompanied by his subjects, dressed as Indians, who will take him to meet his Queen at a sumptuous funeral parlor in colored town. Zulu drinks a toast to his queen with champagne; food and beer are served, and the parade continues. The King and his henchmen toss coconuts to the crowd and the procession heads for the ballroom. No stately sovereign is the Zulu King, no responsibilities for him. Why be a king if you can't have fun? So the Zulu at the ball has the mostest fun of all, and he keeps a-goin as long as the music of the best Negro bands in the country keeps on, and—as long as the beer lasts.

And, brother, that is some goin'.

How everything all fits together and turns out in such an orderly manner is a mystery, for there is no central committee to co-ordinate Mardi Gras. Each group is on its own, and the devil take the hindmost. But it is the world's greatest demonstration and the only one of its kind.

And it's all free.

8

FEVER, DEATH, POLITICS

New Orleans became the fourth largest city in the United States in 1840, despite almost unbelievable losses in population from disease. Until it was finally conquered in 1906, yellow fever descended on New Orleans in epidemic proportions 39 times. The two worst outbreaks, which were accompanied by Asiatic cholera, occurred in 1832 and in 1853. In addition to epidemics, yellow fever was a regular annual visitor, taking so many lives that New Orleans won another questionable sobriquet, that of "graveyard of the country."

Reviewing the records today of the numbers who were stricken and died, one is appalled at the toleration of the frightful conditions that were responsible for so many deaths. The water system was unsanitary and totally inadequate. Swamps surrounded New Orleans breeding mosquitoes that swarmed into the city, and stagnant pools of water were everywhere in the streets. The only sewer system was the open ditches between banquette and street. These were continually clogged with refuse of every description, and the only hope for relief was for rain to wash the rottenness away.

Some of the dreadful conditions in 1832, when over ten thousand lives were lost, were described by Dr. Theodore Clapp, a Presbyterian minister, who completely disregarded his own safety while administering to the tortured people. He wrote:

"During the ten days from October 27th to the 6th of

November, all physicians judged that, at lowest computation, there were five thousand deaths—an average of five hundred every day. Many died of whom no account was rendered. A great number of bodies, with bricks and stones tied to the feet, were thrown into the river. Many were privately interred in gardens and enclosures, on the grounds where they expired, whose names were not recorded in the bills of mortality. Often I was kept in the burying ground for hours in succession, by the incessant, unintermitting arrival of corpses, over whom I was requested to perform a short service. One day, I did not leave the cemetery till nine o'clock at night; the last interments were made by candle light. . . .

"I found at the graveyard a large pile of corpses without coffins, in horizontal layers, one above the other, like corded wood. I was told that there were more than one hundred bodies deposited there. They had been brought by unknown persons, at different hours since nine o'clock the evening previous. Large trenches were dug, into which these uncoffined corpses were thrown indiscriminately. The same day, a private hospital was found deserted; the physicians, nurses, and attendants were all dead, or had run away. Not a living person was in it. The wards were filled with putrid bodies, which, by order of the mayor, were piled in an adjacent yard, and burned, and their ashes scattered to the winds. . . .

"Many persons, even of fortune and popularity, died in their beds without aid, unnoticed and unknown, and lay there for days unburied. In almost every house might be seen the sick, the dying, and the dead, in the same room. All stores, banks, and places of business were closed. There were no means, no instruments for carrying on the ordinary affairs of business; for all the drays, carts, carriages, hand and common wheelbarrows, as well as hearses, were employed in the transportation of corpses, instead of cotton, sugar, and passengers. Words cannot describe my sensations when I first beheld the awful sight of carts driven to the graveyard, and there upturned, and their contents discharged as so many loads of lumber or offal, without a single mark of mourning or respect, because the exigency rendered it impossible.

"Multitudes began the day in apparently good health, and

The Patio Royal, once the Bank of Louisiana, the first bank in the Mississippi Valley where the "Dix" notes were said to have been issued.

A small courtyard in the rear of the Green Shutter Shop.

were corpses before sunset. One morning, as I was going out, I spoke to a gentleman who resided in the very house next to mine. He was standing at his door, and remarked that he felt well; 'but I wonder,' he added, 'that you are alive.' On my return, only two hours afterwards, he was a corpse. A baker died in his cart directly before my door. . . . On a certain evening, about dark, a gentleman called on me to say a short service over the body of a particular friend just deceased; the next morning I performed the same service for him. I went, one Wednesday night, to solemnize the contract of matrimony between a couple of very genteel appearance. The bride was young, and possessed of the most extraordinary beauty. A few hours only had elapsed before I was summoned to perform the last offices over her coffin. . . .

"One family, of nine persons, supped together in perfect health; at the expiration of the next twenty-four hours, eight out of the nine were dead. . . . Persons were found dead all along the streets, particularly early in the mornings. . . . The burning of tar and pitch at every corner; the firing of cannon, by order of the city authorities, along the streets; and the frequent conflagrations which actually occurred at that dreadful period,—all these conspired to add a sublimity and horror to the tremendous scene. Our wise men hoped, by the combustion of tar and gunpowder, to purify the atmosphere. We have no doubt that hundreds perished from mere fright produced by artificial noise, the constant sight of funerals, darkness and various other causes. . . . Often, walking my nightly rounds, the flames from the burning tar so illuminated the city streets and river, that I could see everything almost as distinctly as in the daytime. And through many a window into which was flung the sickly flickering light of these conflagrations, could be seen persons struggling in death, and rigid, blackened corpses, awaiting the arrival of some cart or hearse, as soon as dawn appeared, to transport them to their final resting place. . . . Most of the bodies laid in the ground had a covering of earth but a few inches in depth, and through the porous dust there was an unimpeded emission of all the gases evolved from animal matter, when undergoing the process of putrefaction."

When "yellow jack" struck again in 1853 there were still no underground sewers, but provision had been made for contract scavengers to keep the surface sewers open and clean. But under the authority of the unbelievably corrupt civic officials, their supervision and consequently the results were ineffective. In his *History of New Orleans* John S. Kendall writes: "Scavengers with their carts went knocking from house to house asking if there were any to be buried. Long rows of coffins were laid in furrows two feet deep and hurriedly covered with a few handfuls of earth, which the daily rains washed away, and which then were left," and, in the words of George W. Cable, "filling the air with pestilential odors." Kendall continues: "The details of the city reeking with filth—the bodies of vagrant dogs poisoned after the summer custom of the authorities, putrefying in the streets; the corpses of human beings abandoned unburied. . . add horror to the picture of a desolate city."

In the early 1800's the Board of Trustees of the St. Louis Cathedral, attempting to cope with the burial problems resulting from the epidemics, authorized the erection of a mortuary chapel. This was built adjoining the Old St. Louis Cemetery, where it was convenient on Conti and Rampart Streets. So many yellow fever visitors passed through the doors of this chapel that it was called the "church of the dead." It was dedicated on December 27, 1827, by Père Antoine, the same former Spanish priest Fray Antonio de Sedella who had been expelled from the colony in 1790 by Governor Miro for trying to establish the Inquisition in New Orleans. Père Antoine, as he was then called, had returned five years after, to become the best-loved priest in the history of New Orleans.

Strangely enough, when the hated General Butler had control of New Orleans, and literally face-washed the city, the mortality rate improved immeasurably. Knowing that sick soldiers can't fight, and that filth breeds disease, the General had the city scoured until it shone. It was the cleanest New Orleans had ever been. Butler had unwittingly struck at the cause of yellow fever, and but for a whim of fate he might have made a prodigious discovery.

For thirty years after the Louisiana Purchase the Creoles

managed to retain control of the government, and it was conducted on an unusually high level of dignity and responsibility. As a rule the officials were men of culture, ability, and integrity. Men entered politics then on the basis of their standing in the community and continued in office on their records. They were interested in the welfare and development of the community and not in any personal power or unearned financial gain that could be squeezed from their political prominence.

All of this changed with the advent of the protessional politicians who oozed into New Orleans with the motley migratory tide of the early 1800's. Unable to snatch immediate control, they infiltrated the political structure, infesting it with discord and dissension. Seizing upon the enmity between the Creoles and the Americans as a convenient lever, they kept this ill-feeling alive to further their own covert designs. By 1840 the native gentry were so bewildered and weakened by the confusion and corruption sown by the canny politicos that they were overwhelmed. Machine politics took over, and a new political philosophy was born that immediately began to set up procedures to perpetuate itself. A spoils system was introduced, the police and judicial departments were put under the control of patronage, and the city was then exploited for the personal aggrandizement of those in power. No risks were permitted that a fair election might unseat the incumbents. An election procedure which allowed but one outcome was instituted. This included not only control of the ballot-box, but practical disenfranchisement of any voter unwise enough to oppose the faction in control. Elections became a farce and were accompanied by armed riots and bloodshed.

This general situation, with its handicaps and abuses, continued for about twenty years, and in 1858 New Orleans facing a mayoralty election was ready for the usual intimidation, violence, and rioting. As the time for election approached, a gang of rowdies broke into the office of the Registrar of Voters, made off with the lists of those eligible to vote, and proceeded to eliminate names deemed unfriendly or antagonistic to the incumbent party. No action was taken by the Registrar or the police to regain the registration lists or to punish the offenders;

and this apathy on the part of the authorities was the spark that touched off, as Kendall puts it, "one of the most singular uprisings" in all New Orleans' history.

Three months before the theft of the registration rolls, several Creoles, incensed at the almost daily beatings and murders that were taking place in the city, held a meeting and started the formation of a group to do something about the corrupt situation. They called themselves the Vigilance Committee, possibly after a similar organization in San Francisco, and although it quickly grew to over a thousand members it was so secretly formed that there was complete surprise when its existence became known. The commander of the movement was Captain James K. Duncan, a former West Pointer and Reservist, who later became a Confederate General.

When the stolen voters' lists were not returned or any action taken for their recovery, it was clear that the time had come for the organization to come out into the open and to take action. On June 2, five days before the election, the armed Vigilantes formed at the corner of Canal and Royal Streets and marched into the French Quarter, where they seized the Cabildo and the Arsenal and established their headquarters. The city government had been removed from the Cabildo to new quarters in the modern city in 1852 and the old building had become the chambers of the Louisiana State Supreme Court. The Vigilantes rolled out the artillery that they found in the Arsenal and set up fortifications in the Place d'Armes, which a few years before had been re-christened Jackson Square in honor of the hero of the Battle of New Orleans. Sentries were posted on Royal and Chartres Streets and at all the approaches leading into that part of the city. The following morning, announcements appeared in the papers informing the public of the purpose and intentions of the Committee. The notices began, "Having resolved to free our city from the murderers that infest it, we have assumed its temporary government. . . . We have no political object in view, and we call on all good men and true to join us in the work we have undertaken." They continued, "We shall inflict prompt and exemplary punishment upon well-known and notorious offenders and violators of the rights and privileges of citizens,

The St. Louis Hotel as it appeared from the corner of Royal and St. Louis Streets in 1861. At one time the Capitol of Louisiana it had a bloody and dramatic existence. It was badly damaged by a hurricane and razed in 1916. Near the Belgian granite blocks and the trees down the middle.

Wrought Iron Screen of the Reception Meridian.

and shall not lay down their arms till this is effected."

At the same time, a printed proclamation addressed to the "Citizens of New Orleans" was posted in public places throughout the city:

"After years of disorder, outrage, and unchecked assassination, the people, unable and unwilling either to bow down in unresisting submission to a set of ruffians, or to abandon the city in which their business, their social sympathies, and their affections cluster, have at length risen in their might—have quietly taken possession of the arsenal and buildings at Jackson Square, and have established here the headquarters of a Vigilance Committee; pledging each to the other to maintain the rights inviolable of every peaceful and law-abiding citizen, restore public order, abate crime, and expel or punish, as the law may determine, such notorious robbers and assassins as the arm of the law has, either from the infidelity of its public servants, or the inefficiency of the laws themselves, left unwhipped of justice.

"For the present the ordinary machinery of police justice is suspended—the mayor and the recorders, we understand, yielding up the power they confess the inability to exercise for the preservation of public peace, and the preservation of property; and the Vigilance Committee will therefore provisionally act in their stead, administering to each and every malefactor the punishment due his crimes, without hate, prejudice or political bias. All citizens who have sympathies with this movement, and who think the time has come when New Orleans shall be preserved like all other well-ordered and civilized communities, will report themselves without delay at the Principal (as the Cabildo was sometimes called) where the character of the movement will be explained, and the determination of the people more fully made known. All has been done noiselessly thus far; all will continue noiselessly, dispassionately, and justly, but the ruffians who have dyed our streets in the gore of inoffending citizens, and spread terror among the peacable, orderly and well disposed, must leave or perish. So the people have determined—Vox Populi, Vox Dei."

Regardless of the lofty motives and the justification for such action, this was a revolt against a legal government and it

constituted an insurrection. But the reaction by the authorities was, at the very least, peculiar. Sympathetic elements had crept in, and when prompt retaliatory action might have been expected little was forthcoming. The Mayor ordered a special session of the Common Council and summoned Major General John L. Lewis, commander of the Louisiana militia. General Lewis refused to call out the militia, and the Council debated and passed the buck, finally adjourning at the end of the day without accomplishing anything. As for the police, they had disappeared from the streets as if they had never existed.

While the Council was vacillating and contributing to the general confusion, the Vigilantes were strengthening and improving their position. Tearing up the pavement on Chartres Street to get granite blocks for fortifications, they moved their lines up to Canal Street, and built barricades of granite blocks and cotton bales at Chartres and the other streets leading into the French Quarter. Sympathizers, among them many powerful and influential people, began to flock to the aid of the Committeemen. The French Quarter became an armed city. At the same time a mob was being organized on the other side of Canal Street, setting up battle-lines facing the fortifications of the Vigilantes along Canal Street on the Frenchtown side.

Thus the situation rested, or rather seethed; thousands of armed men with emotions aflame waited for the order to kill brother, neighbor, or friend. Mayor Charles M. Waterman, who was not a candidate for re-election, had gone to the Arsenal in company with General Lewis and other advisors to confer with Duncan in an attempt to break up the revolt or to reach a compromise. But the Vigilantes were obdurate. This went on for two days, the Mayor running back and forth between his office and the Arsenal, while the size of the group opposing the Vigilantes increased to over six thousand. Stores were closed and business was at a standstill. Throughout the city was confusion, horror, and the constant threat of violence and bloodshed. At the end of the second day of frantic negotiations, the Mayor realizing the horrible consequences of not working out some kind of settlement, made an agreement with the Committee which was a virtual acceptance of their demands. It was agreed that the members of the Committee would be

sworn in as special police for the period of the election and that they would have the right to retain their organization.

The announcement of this action, far from being received with relief, was greeted with yells of fury and derision from the mob. The Common Council denounced the Mayor's action and requested the Board of Aldermen, which handled such proceedings under the city charter, to impeach Mayor Waterman. The Mayor fled to the Arsenal for protection, and went through the motions of swearing in the Vigilantes as special police. But this was a hollow gesture, for in the City Hall the newly appointed Acting Mayor began recruiting a special police force to replace the regular force, which had disbanded—apparently in the belief that being a cop was neither a healthy nor a desirable occupation under the circumstances. Through inducements to volunteer, the special force soon numbered sixteen hundred men, and with the announcement of their appointment some of the tension relaxed.

Fortunately, the mob that had formed in the uptown section, while large in numbers and potentially a great menace to the peace of the city, was unorganized and without leadership. They engaged mostly in running back and forth between their lines on Canal Street and the City Hall, shouting and firing their muskets and pistols into the air and fighting among themselves. Five men were killed and several seriously wounded in the confusion, but the incident that would have precipitated untold carnage and was horribly imminent and ominous for five days never came off. While one of the cannons was being prepared for the protection of the Cabildo a premature explosion killed one of the Vigilantes and wounded another. Eleven men died mysteriously within the barricades during the period of the uprising.

At the height of the tension, a couple of nights before the election, a group in the uptown section was being harangued by a drunken ex-sailor who was attempting to exhort the men to attack the Vigilantes. Suddenly they were thrown into great excitement by the sound of firing in the French Quarter. It appeared as if the long-awaited battle had begun and the tired and frightened officials sprang to life. They hastily organized a company of a hundred men to guard the City Hall. Back at

Fort Vigilance, as the Cabildo stronghold had been dubbed, everyone was on razor edge. A spy who had been sent by Captain Duncan to keep watch on the activities at the City Hall had reported that an attack on Jackson Square was to be made that night. The sentries were warned to maintain a sharp watch and later, when the sentinel at Orleans and Royal Streets reported that a squad of men was advancing down Orleans Street, the defenders of the Cabildo were alerted. As the oncoming men came into St. Peter Street the order was given to fire, and this was the shooting that was heard at City Hall. Five men were killed and nine wounded before the Vigilante sharpshooters realized that they were slaughtering their own men, who had been out inspecting the fortifications on Canal Street.

While the Mayor, who had been informed that his life was in great danger, and the Committeemen were ensconced in their fortifications, the election was held and proved to be one of the most orderly in the history of the city. After the balloting was over and the votes had been counted the Vigilantes began to evacuate the Arsenal and the Cabildo and went to their homes. The Committee was dissolved by a notice which Captain Duncan published in the papers, stating that its members would be at the call of the new Mayor and city officials if needed.

Former Mayor Waterman never went back to the City Hall. Frightened, confused, and broken, he secluded himself in his hotel room. Upon more sober afterthought the Board of Aldermen refused to pursue the impeachment proceedings, and it adopted a resolution declaring that "this Board now verily believes" that Waterman "acted in all that he has done conscientiously, and, as he understood, to the best interests of his fellow-citizens. . . ." Waterman suffered disastrous business reverses and three years later disappeared, leaving a suicide note.

9

RULE OF THE CARPETBAG

Opera was probably given in New Orleans as early as 1791 but it struggled along until 1837 before becoming popular. The beautiful French Opera House was opened in 1859 on Bourbon and Toulouse Streets, and it shortly became the focal point of all social life in New Orleans. Not to be a member or at least a regular patron branded one as belonging outside the chosen circle. Here the lovely Creole women displayed their costly jewels and beautiful costumes imported from Paris. It was the rendezvous of wealthy planters and their families, dashing young gallants, and, in the lattice-covered boxes, out of sight of the audience, those in mourning and those "expecting."

The first shot of the Civil War was fired in April 1861 at Fort Sumter, Charleston, South Carolina, at the command of General P. T. G. Beauregard of Louisiana (who after the war returned to New Orleans and lived first at 1113 Chartres Street and later at 934 Royal Street). For a year New Orleans saw no fighting, but it became an important source of supply of men and materials for the Confederate Army. To dry up this commisariat and at the same time to split the Confederacy in two, the city became the object of attack by the Federal forces. The defenses were weak and, after a brief campaign, Admiral David G. Farragut came up with a fleet of warships from the Gulf and captured the city. Control was turned over to General Benjamin F. Butler, known as "silver spoon" Butler

because it is alleged that he stole the silver services of the wealthy Creoles for his own use. In the seven months he was in command at New Orleans before his recall by President Lincoln, Butler succeeded in making himself the most thoroughly detested figure in the entire history of the city. He is still remembered there as "Butler the Beast."

One of his first acts was to hang a man by the name of W. B. Mumford, an overzealous patriot who had torn down the Union flag that Admiral Farragut had flown over the United States Mint, at the end of the Esplanade in Frenchtown. The Union forces had not as yet taken over the city, and Mumford's action, while certainly not proper, was that of a hothead. After a farcical trial for his crime Mumford was found guilty and—with irony or appropriateness, one wonders which—was hanged publicly in the yard of the Mint.

Butler closed up the gambling-houses and, it is said, permitted them to re-open upon payment of a substantial fee to his brother, A. J. Butler, who acted as the General's agent. What General Butler confiscated under the guise of military law, brother Butler disposed of profitably, often to the enemy badly in need of supplies, and both Butlers became rich. But while Butler ruled the city with an iron hand and plundered it to his own and the personal gain of his relatives, he is most despised today for his infamous General Order No. 28.

This came about as a result of the attitude of the ladies of New Orleans toward Union soldiers and officers who it seemed, were offended when the "grandes dames" drew away from them on the streets and in other ways showed their contempt for the Federals. Certainly some appropriate protection should have been provided against this heinous offense. There was! It read, "As the officers and soldiers of the United States have been subject to repeated insults from the women (calling themselves ladies) of New Orleans, in return for the most scrupulous non-interference and courtesy on our part, it is ordered that hereafter when a female shall, by word, gesture, or movement, insult or show contempt for any officer or soldier of the United States, she shall be regarded and held liable and treated as a woman of the town plying her avocation."

The Louisiana State Bank. Designed by the famous architect Benjamin Latrobe. This corner of Royal and Conti Streets was the financial heart of early French-town. This building is now "Maspero's," a leading antique store.

garconniere, slave quarters, and coach house.

Thus any woman in New Orleans could be arrested, locked up, and fined upon the word of any member of the Union military forces. As a strange reaction, in a storm of protest and indignation that reached international proportions, the least-aroused were the New Orleans ladies themselves, who seemed quite smug and self-satisfied over the furore they had created, while from the bordellos and baudy-bins there came a wailing loud and lusty. Generâl Butler said himself that no arrests were made under this order.

If the years of war had been hell to New Orleans, the era of Reconstruction that followed, from 1865 to 1877, was damnation—the blackest period in the city's history. For thirty years before the war the character and tone of politics had grown steadily worse. Compared to what came after the war, the earlier period was amateurish. Returning soldiers found that their city had been taken over by scalawags, scoundrels, and carpetbaggers, Northern sharpers who carried their papers in briefcase-like portmanteaus made of material resembling a carpet. Negroes, bewildered and unable to cope with their new liberties, trying to conceal their sense of inadequacy and fear in exaggerated bluster and defiance, constituted an additional and increasing problem. A large group of Negroes, who supported and led by the carpetbaggers, had reached a certain degree of solidarity and strength, formed a procession one evening in July 1866 to march to Mechanics Institute in the new city for a meeting. As they started to move, an armed riot broke out between police and the marchers at the corner of Canal and Burgundy Streets, at the edge of the French Quarter. This was brought under control, but it flared up again later at the meeting in the Institute. When it had quieted down forty-eight had been killed and more than a hundred and sixty had been wounded, and with the exception of one of the dead and ten of the wounded, all were of the carpetbag faction. This massacre, for that is what it amounted to, put the city back under strict military control in the person of the redoubtable General Phil Sheridan.

The political situation continued to grow worse. It was not an easy matter for the whites to adjust themselves to the experience of living under Negro officials and taking orders from

Negro police, or to mix with them on a basis of equality in restaurants, trains, and schools. Gambling was wide open, and the denizens of the low dives solicited business and operated brazenly on the main streets. Violence and robbery were everyday affairs and people feared walking on the streets, even in the daylight. Elections were a disgrace, resulting so frequently in brawls and riots that this came to be expected as normal. Voting was a dangerous venture for the individual and getting the votes counted fairly was next to impossible. In June 1874 a semi-military organization called the Crescent White League—similar to the earlier Vigilantes—was formed to combat these rotten conditions and to defend the rights of the white people against further encroachment by the Negro. It was headed by General R. N. Ogden, and recruits soon flocked to join this popular movement.

A few months later, in September, Samuel D. McEnery was elected Governor. Before he could take office, the opposing candidate, W. P. Kellogg, fortified by an army of protectors called the Metropolitan Police, seized the Capitol, which was then the St. Louis Hotel on Royal and St. Louis Streets in Frenchtown. This inflamed the populace, and a mass meeting was called at the corner of Royal and Canal Streets for the following morning, September 14. Several thousand people assembled and an ultimatum was sent to Kellogg demanding that he and his followers abdicate. Kellogg refused, and when this word was received by the White League the people were told to arm themselves and return prepared to fight. Warned of the impending battle, General James Longstreet, the Metropolitan Police commander, fortified the Capitol in the St. Louis Hotel and set up fortifications at the Cabildo and in Jackson Square. Another force was established at the foot of Canal Street, under the command of General A. S. Badger. In the afternoon the White Leaguers attacked, overwhelming the Metropolitan Police on Canal Street by the force of numbers. In a bloody battle the League forced the police back through the streets of the French Quarter to Jackson Square. The League forces surrounded the Cabildo and the other buildings where the police had taken refuge, and encircled the St. Louis Hotel. The siege lasted all night and, in the face of far supe-

A scene in the Cotton House courtyard. The first building on the right is a former slave quarter.

The entrance to Antoine's.

rior numbers and the obvious determination of the people to force a showdown, the Metropolitans surrendered in the morning. It was learned that Kellogg had appealed to the United States Army for protection and had been spirited away to Army headquarters, where he was safe. More than three thousand colored militia troops were found inside the Capitol. The White League forces suffered twenty-one killed and nineteen wounded; Kellogg's Metropolitan Police forty killed and two hundred wounded. The death list of the Kellogg forces included General Badger.

The Kellogg regime having collapsed, Governor McEnery, the properly elected favorite of the people, was re-installed in office, and the citizens were jubilant. But victory was short-lived. Two days later a communication was received from President Grant, ill-advised but nevertheless backed up by troops, ordering McEnery to evacuate and to re-instate Kellogg. McEnery had no choice but to comply promptly, and again martial law was declared over New Orleans. Soldiers established a military area around the State House, fortifying it with artillery and troops, through which no-one could pass without an order. Kellogg then remained in office by virtue of the protection of the United States troops, who maintained armed guard for the remainder of the term of office.

Elections in the fall of 1876 again produced duplicate administrations, each claiming victory. The Democrats, recognized by the people, were headed by Francis T. Nicholls. The carpetbag candidate, who was supported by Federal troops, was S. B. Packard. Both factions held inaugural ceremonies in January 1877 to establish their officers, the Republicans carrying on operations in the St. Louis Hotel State House, which they held only because of the troops protecting it, and the Nicholls forces taking control of every other official building in the city.

The Republicans, numbering between eight and nine hundred, lived in the Capitol in a state of seige for two months. The place became filthy, there being no provision for cleaning or for removing dirt and garbage. Smallpox broke out. In April an order came from Washington—one small consideration of a national political "deal"—for the Army to withdraw. With-

out the support of the soldiers Packard's government collapsed, and Nicholls took over. Packard disappeared, and with his exodus the horrendous nightmare of "Reconstruction" in New Orleans came to an end.

The Capitol was removed to Baton Rouge shortly afterwards and the hotel remained empty for several years. It became a public menace, suffered extensive damage from a hurricane, and was torn down. All that remains today of its former glory and pomp is the vacant, boarded-up lot that you see taking up the whole square on St. Louis Street, from Royal to Chartres Streets.

10

BLOOD ON THE BANQUETTE

Late in the afternoon of Tuesday, July 5, 1881, a short, well-dressed, rather heavy-set, broad-shouldered Italian sauntered down Decatur Street from Canal towards Jackson Square. As if he had not a care in the world he nodded to passers-by, and occasionally he paused to speak to an acquaintance. Behind, and at a safe distance, separated in order to be as inconspicuous as possible, four men followed, keeping the Sicilian in sight. When he stopped they paused too, shifting their relative position so that their presence would not be noticed. But the instant their quarry moved on they again resumed their stalking. Coming to St. Peter Street away from the stores where people were shopping, the Italian crossed the street to the quiet of the Park. The four men suddenly quickened their pace and at a signal drew their guns and converged on the unsuspecting Italian. Caught completely off guard, Giuseppe Esposito, leader of the dread Mafia, brutal mad-dog sensation-killer who was desperately wanted by the authorities of three nations, was arrested without a struggle. Two of the four assailants were Mike and Dave Hennessey of the New Orleans detective force, who by this arrest earned a reward of five thousand dollars and by the same action marked themselves for death. The other two men were Marshalls James Mooney and D. Boland, New York detectives in the service of the Italian government. These officers knew that when the bandit chief did not appear in his usual haunts gangs of blood-

thirsty hoodlums would come looking for him armed with stilettoes and slug-spewing sawed-off shotguns, the basic tools of the Mafia trade. To outwit these desperadoes and to prevent bloodshed, Esposito was quickly whisked off to the docks and spirited aboard a ship bound for New York. Wanted in Italy for eighteen brutal slayings and more than a hundred torture extortions, the United States granted immediate extradition, and despite desperate attempts by the underworld in New York to rescue him Esposito was hurried back to Palermo, where he spent the rest of his life in chains.

The Mafia, the Camorra, and, in the United States, the Black Hand were secret Italian criminal organizations that took root in America when their leaders were driven out of their own country by the Italian government. New Orleans newspapers as early as 1861 began to reflect the presence of well-organized bands of Sicilian criminals in the city. Set up like a political party with its "state leaders,""city bosses," and "ward heelers," a nation-wide crime empire came into being, with New Orleans as its headquarters and branches in New York, San Francisco, Chicago, and other large cities.

Two years before the termination of his career in New Orleans, Esposito was the chieftain of a band of cutthroats who terrorized southern Italy by robbing and then disposing of their victims. In cases where it was more profitable the sufferers were held for ransom and brutally tortured so that they would request their relatives to pay any price demanded for their freedom. One of the victims of this band was Reverend Rose, an English clergyman. As a means of identification, the brigands cut off the cleric's ears and sent them with a demand for ransom to his family. The family appealed to the British government, which put pressure on Italian officials. The Italian government then sent its Army to wipe out these outlaws. Esposito, knowing every mountain rill and ravine in his stronghold, miraculously excaped, came to New York and then traveled on to New Orleans, where he seized the leadership of the local society. This amounted to practical control of the Mafia in the entire country. As a blind he established a fruit and vegetable business on Customhouse (now Iberville) Street, between Burgundy and Rampart Streets, and set up housekeeping with a

The Old Opera House as it appeared in 1850. The center of Papanikolaou would like for several decades, it was destroyed by fire in 1919.

Stocks at Hilsden in which the wrong-doers of early Frankstown were punished in public. In the Cabildo.

Old houses on Augusta Street that have known better and livelier days.

young Italian girl on Chartres Street, between Dumaine and St. Philip Streets. Many other members of the society sneaked in from Italy to join Esposito in Frenchtown. According to the best information available, the leader of the New Orleans Mafia at the time was Anthony Abruzzi, who, resenting Esposito's avowed intention to depose him, reported to the Italian consul that Esposito was in the city. The consul in turn notified Chief of Police Colonel Thomas N. Boylan, who set in motion a manhunt for Esposito that involved a two-year chase by American, British, and Italian authorities through half the country, finally terminating in his dramatic capture by the Hennesseys and the New York detectives in New Orleans.

The Hennesseys immediately received Black Hand notes threatening their lives. Warnings were hissed into their ears in public places and they were constantly harassed by threats. Mike, a cousin of Dave, finally fled. Five years later his body, with its head half torn away, was found in a ditch in Houston, Texas, a sawed-off shotgun lying alongside. No-one was ever brought to trial for this killing, but Dave is reported to have made the statement before he died that he knew who had shot his cousin. It was to be five more years before the vengeance of the mob was carried out on Dave Hennessey.

Mafia vengeance for the Esposito betrayal was not long delayed. The society made its own laws. Appealing to the police was the worst thing a Mafioso could do. The word was out—"Get Abruzzi!" At a special meeting of the society the supreme council selected Salvatore Arditto to be the assassin of their former leader, who had disappeared. Ten days after Esposito's apprehension it was learned that Abruzzi was attending a meeting on the top floor of Screwman's Hall, at the corner of Exchange and Bienville Streets. At that time a low fence ran in front of the building. The mobster crouched behind this, resting his blunderbuss loaded with slugs on the top, pointed at the entrance to the building. When the meeting was over scores of people walked past the killer, but none dared give warning. The unsuspecting Abruzzi appeared in the narrow, poorly lighted doorway, not ten feet from his lurking murderer. With a horrible blast the slugs tore into the victim's chest, ripping it wide open. With blood gushing unchecked

Abruzzi fell forward into the street, dead. Dropping his Mafioso trade-mark beside the lifeless informer, Arditto lighted a cigar and with head high, his mission completed, strode off. Dozens of people must have been eyewitnesses to this brazen slaying, but no-one would testify. The society would not; others dared not. Arditto was suspected and brought to trial, but he was quickly acquited.

A new Chieftain, Charles Matranga, assisted by his brother Tony, a notorious hoodlum, then took over leadership of the Black Hand and installed up-to-date methods. New members were subtly recruited and were in the circle before they realized it. Once in, there was no out but death. Fealty to the crime clan was pledged in blood before a robed council and in the presence of the insigne of the syndicate, a human skull pierced by stilettoes crossed through the eye-sockets. A council of fifteen members, whose identities were concealed by black robes, determined policies of the organization, wrote extortion letters, and assigned vendetta killers. No-one dared refuse an edict of the council. To even hesitate was tantamount to suicide. Escape was impossible—its members were everywhere. Under the new leadership the Mafia entered fresh fields, spreading a wave of terror for nearly ten years. Kidnappings and killings went unpunished, for it was impossible to get evidence and testimony. The Mafia was never mentioned, but everybody knew of its oppressive, infiltrated existence. The residents of the Italian section lived under a pall of horror, and the police themselves were powerless, having been defied and warned to keep hands off. It sounds like a Class B movie plot, but it it is all true.

David C. Hennessey, now Chief of Police of New Orleans, had been repeatedly threatened, and he was determined to stamp out the evil society. Knowing that the killings would not stop until the Mafia was completely destroyed, Hennessey had waged a ten-year war, even going to Rome to study the records of more than eleven hundred known Italian and Sicilian criminals who, it was believed, had come to New Orleans. With the help of the Italian officials, who were just as anxious to remove the disgrace to their people as the Americans, Hennessey had begun to build a case which he was preparing

to present to the Grand Jury. Two days before the Grand Jury was to convene, Hennessey left his office and started for his home, located near the French Quarter. As he came towards it he saw a boy of about fourteen years of age ahead of him. As Hennessey reached his house the boy turned, looked at the Chief, and then gave a signal—a shrill whistle of two long equal notes followed by three short ones in the same pitch. Hennessey stopped an instant, thinking that this was rather odd, and then turned towards his house. He did not know, in fact never did know, that he had just heard the special Mafia signal which was used to announce the approach of a person intended for death. Tired from the day's work and his heavy responsibilities, Hennessey slowly climbed the steps of his porch. He was just about to put his key in the lock when the Mafia struck. A volley of shotgun slugs and revolver bullets poured into his back. This would have killed a lesser man instantly, but not Hennessey. With blood pouring from six wounds, the Chief turned, drew his gun, and returned the fire of his attackers. Hearing the shooting, Captain William O'Connor, who lived nearby and who was also returning home, rushed to his stricken superior, crying, "My God, Dave, what happened?"

"They've got me, Bill," gasped Hennessey.

"Who," demanded O'Connor.

"Dagoes," whispered the Chief, and collapsed.

Rushed to the Charity Hospital, Hennessey died at about nine o'clock the following morning. His assassination created a tremendous sensation in New Orleans, and hundreds of Italians were immediately rounded up by the police. There was wild talk of lynching for days and many Italians published notices in newspapers disclaiming any connection with the Mafia. Outraged, the City Council called a special session and authorized the Mayor to enlist the help of the city's leading business and professional men in solving the monstrous crime. A group of prominent lawyers and business leaders known as the Committee of Fifty was formed. It went right to work with the police, and in the month that followed more than a thousand suspects were picked up and thoroughly grilled. Out of these, twenty-one were found to be conclusively implicated in the assassination. They were immediately indicted and a date was

set for the trial. It turned out to be another blemish in the city's history.

The society obtained the foremost legal talent of the time for the defendants, and the trial became the most hotly contested and bitterly fought legal battle in the history of the local courts. It was later learned that funds for the defense were obtained by squeezing dimes, quarters, and dollars from local grocerymen and merchants in Dallas, Chicago, and Philadelphia—wherever the Mafia was entrenched. The society realized that this was to be a blood-struggle, a battle for the very existence of the Mafia.

At the trial eyewitnesses to the shooting were produced, who pointed out and identified several of the defendants. The shotguns used in the slaying had been found in the gutter after the crime, and they were traced from their foreign manufacturer to one of the accused men. In the midst of the trial Manuel Polizzi, one of the defendants, broke down and confessed that he had been present at the meeting of the Mafia when Hennesseys's death was decreed and the details of the assassination were planned. In addition he gave a list of members, implicated his fellow-conspirators, and explained procedures, signs, and signals of the society. Had these been known beforehand, perhaps Hennessey upon hearing the Mafia death-knell might not have been caught off guard, and might have taken action to save his life. In addition to the abundant direct evidence, circumstantial evidence of the most damaging character was piled on. In the end, despite the conclusive nature of this evidence, which is just as clear today as it was then, most of the defendants were acquited. The jury disagreed in the cases of the remainder. It quickly became clear that the jury had been tampered with; that liberal and effective use had been made of Mafia gold. The verdict threw the city in a furore. Pending final disposition of their cases the prisoners were locked up in the Old Parish Prison, on Orleans Street just outside of Frenchtown.

Astonishment and disbelief turned to rage as the full meaning and impact of the verdict began to be understood and felt. The spirit of protest that had several times before caused the citizens of New Orleans to rise up and take matters into their

own hands when they were dissatisfied with the actions of the authorities again showed itself in a newspaper notice the next day, March 14, 1891. Signed by fifty-seven prominent citizens, who again called themselves Vigilantes, it called for a mass meeting at Royal and Canal Street, which had become the popular public meeting-place. Whether this group had any connection with the Vigilance Committee of two decades before is not definitely known, but it is strongly suspected. And, although the same names can be found on both lists, this new committee was not necessarily the same as the Committee of Fifty which had been formed to help solve the slaying of Police Chief Hennessey.

Long before the time set for the meeting the streets were jammed for blocks in all directions. Ten minutes before the appointed time the crowd had become so unruly that William S. Parkinson, a leading New Orleans attorney who had been selected as leader of the movement, began to speak. He said, "When the law is powerless the rights delegated by the people are relegated back to the people, and they are justified in doing what the courts have failed to do." He went on to explain that the Mafia trials had been a mockery, outlined in detail what the group which had called the meeting intended to do, and called for a sign of approval from the crowd. The answer was a tumultuous roar of cheers and applause. With this vote of confidence, Parkinson called out, "Follow us," jumped down, and, with the Committee members behind him pushed his way through the crowd to Royal and Bienville Streets, where he lived and where the guns and ammunition of the Committee were stored. With the members fully armed, they formed into ranks and marched down Royal Street to Orleans and out Orleans toward the prison. The crowd, seething with excitement, swarmed at their heels and increased in volume at every intersection.

When Parkinson and his followers reached the main gate of the prison, on Orleans Street, there were from six to eight thousand supporters behind him. They streamed around the rambling old building, clamoring at the locked doors for admittance and threatening to dynamite their way in. It was at this point that it became apparent that the attack had been

carefully planned and rehearsed ahead of time. Each member of the Committee had a list containing the names of eleven of the prisoners who were believed to be guilty beyond all question of doubt. Instructions were to molest no-one who was not on this list. Making a formal request for admittance to the prison, which was prompty refused by the guards, Parkinson gave orders to smash down the gates. A battering-ram brought along for the purpose was put to use, and backed by the determination of strong men, quickly smashed the gates and cleared the way. Inside, the harried guards had hurriedly opened the cells containing the prisoners and had bade them look out for themselves as best they could. The guards made a slight attempt at resistance, but seeing the size and attitude of the crowd, they decided that giving their lives futilely for the worthless prisoners was neither practical nor wise. Disarming them, Parkinson posted his own guards at the gate with instructions to permit no-one to enter who did not have a permit signed by him. Simultaneously with the smashing of the front gate, a party at the rear entrance, on St. Ann Street, broke in and proceeded to join those in the front. Parkinson and his followers then started a search for the prisoners.

Until interrupted by the Vigilante uprising the prisoners had been arrogantly drinking toasts to their victory with expensive champagne that had been smuggled in to them. Their attitude was suddenly transformed. Upon being warned by the guards of the approach of the enraged citizens they scurried about like the rats they were, searching for some secluded corner or cranny where they could crawl into and escape discovery. Seven of those on the list that the Committee carried with them were found crouching in the washrooms in the women's side of the prison. They were immediately shot down as mercilessly as Hennessey had been five months earlier. Two more were discovered wedged into a small packing-case under a stairway, customarily used as a "doghouse" for the head prison guard's bull-terrier. They, too, were lined up against the wall and shot down. Observers stated later that the box in which they were found was so small that one man would have extreme difficulty crowding himself into it under normal circumstances. Such is the strength of terror.

Facade of the architect Salpointe on Bastanchury building at 520 Royal Street

A corner of the Scriptorium courtyard. This is also known as the Fighting Cock. This particular view is the subject of countless photographs and paintings.

If more proof were needed that this was no un-planned heat-of-the-moment affair, it came when the last two of the eleven prisoners sought by the mob were taken outside of the prison to meet their fate. It would have been easier and quicker to have disposed of them all inside the jail, but this definitely would have placed the entire responsibility for the uprising upon the members of the Committee. By having part of the killings take place outside, the concentrated responsibility was removed from the small group and placed partially with the mob of thousands milling about outside. Further, by giving credence to the announced purpose of the uprising—the resumption by the people of power previously delegated by them—an air of quasi-legality was given to the affair. This refinement in the code of extra-legal homicide was insisted upon by the attorney on the Committee.

The first culprit to be hauled outside was the squealer Manuel Polizzi, who was carried, squirming and whining, out of the St. Ann Street side on the shoulders of one whom the papers described as a "stalwart public official," and whom everybody knew to be a wealthy sugar planter named Ross. A noose was placed around Polizzi's neck, and he was hanged to a lamppost on the corner of St. Ann and Treme (now N. Liberty) Streets. To insure that there would be no further miscarriage of justice, the area around the light was cleared, and a party of men swung into position with the precision and obedience of trained troops and poured the contents of their Winchesters into the twisting form of the Sicilian. The remaining prisoner favored for special outside treatment was Antonio Bagnetto, who deserved credit for injecting a little humor and originality into the macabre situation. Designated for a starring role in the proceedings, Bagnetto at first could not be found by the raiders. Finally, when it began to appear as if he had escaped, the wily Italian was located shamming death on a slab in the morgue alongside a prisoner who had died a more normal death. He was dragged to the front of the prison on Orleans Street and hanged to a tree.

It had been less than an hour since the meeting at Royal and Canal Streets. Parkinson made a short speech asking the people to return to their homes and added, as had each earlier

Vigilance Committee, that though they were disbanding they would always be available when needed.

Chief of Police Hennessey had been avenged, and New Orleans subsided.

As was to be expected, the affair created a sensation outside of New Orleans. Mayor Joseph Shakespeare, speaking to the national press stated that, "the act was—however deplorable—a necessity and justifiable." Newspapers and magazines writing about the affair were generally sympathetic, but the international phase became critical. Italy demanded punishment of the lynching party and insisted upon payment of reparations. She recalled her ambassador and severed diplomatic relations with the United States. President Benjamin Harrison retaliated by recalling the American ambassador from Italy and both countries began to prepare for war. The situation reached dangerous proportions, but it was finally settled when the United States agreed to pay Italy 125,000 lire in reparations. No investigation, however, was ever made.

While the Hennessey matter had been a crippling blow to the Mafia, it was not crushed. Lacking intelligent leadership, it struggled along for about ten years on a small scale, sending extortion notes highly embellished with scarlet skulls and crossbones to small businessmen. Then another arch-criminal came to New Orleans to revive and rejuvenate the languishing Black Hand. Also the leader of the Camorra in Palermo, Francesco Matesi assumed the name of Genova when he appeared in New Orleans. Immediately feuds, murders, kidnappings, and terror broke out again, and nearly a hundred killings were to come in the next few years.

Once more Frenchtown was the base of operations. One of the most horrible crimes was the Lantana kidnapping in 1907. Little Walter Lantana, the eight-year-old son of Peter Lantana, an undertaker of St. Philip Street, was lured away in a closed wagon by the promise of candy, and ransom of six thousand dollars was demanded. Before it could be paid the child's body was found. Long investigation followed, accompanied by help from the Vigilantes, who had re-appeared, and several Italians were convicted. But Genova, who was known to have been involved, could not be brought into it. The Vigilance Com-

mittee found out that the plot for this crime had been hatched in a house at 515 St. Philip Street.

In a fine old mansion at 1113 Chartres Street, where Paul Morphy, world champion chess player had been born in 1837, and where General P. T. G. Beauregard, the officer who caused the first shot of the Civil War to be fired, had lived, a fine old Italian family named Giacona operated a wine business. One night in 1909 neighbors heard loud and angry voices in the rear of the residence, followed by a fusillade of rifle and revolver shots. More shooting followed, accompanied by shrill feminine screams and hoarse shouting of men. Then there was a clatter of feet rushing over the courtyard cobblestones to the street. When the police arrived three men were found dead, and a fourth, trailing blood, was picked up six blocks away, all of them known to be Mafia criminals.

Giacona's explanation was simple. Threatened by a gang of men who demanded regular payments of money, he had defied them. With his sons he had established a constant armed vigil, and when the Mafia appeared for a showdown they had gotten it in a manner sudden and unexpected. Two weeks later a covered wagon full of Italians drove rapidly up Chartres Street. When opposite the Giacona residence a side of the wagon dropped and volley after volley of buckshot was poured into the house. Providentially, the family had gone out only a few minutes before. Several years later, as Giacona and his nephew came out of the lobby of the Monteleone Hotel on Royal Street, three men sprang from a doorway across the street and fired at them. Both were hit and seriously wounded, but they finally recovered.

Murders by the score continued for reasons imagined but never proved. Eduardo di Martini, a redheaded Italian and big-shot Mafioso, was blasted as he stepped out of a grocery store at Bourbon and St. Ann and started across the street. Frequently suspected by the police, he had been either missing or protected with an unshakable alibi when they tried to lay a major crime at his door. Vincent Morecki was suspected of the slaying, but there was no evidence. It didn't matter. Morecki's limp, riddled body was found at 2:30 in the morning a month later at Rampart and the Esplanade. A pistol was added to the

sawed-off shotgun usually left as a calling card. An obscure shoe repairman too poor to meet demands made on him was jostled on Decatur Street one day by a fellow countryman and fell with a stiletto in his side. An elderly woman was shot in the abdomen one Sunday while seated in her little candy store. The intersection of Chartres and St. Philip Streets became known as "Slaughter Square" because at least seventeen known Mafia murders were committed there. A short block away, also on St. Philip Street, just off Decatur, is the "Circle of Death," a spot no larger than thirty feet, where over a short period of time Mafia hoods took three lives. A homemade bomb exploded in front of the St. Louis Cathedral. And so it went.

But the end of the Black Hand had to come. Any rotten, cancerous growth throttling the life and progress of a people must eventually run its course. That is what happened to the Mafia, the Camorra, the Black Hand and all of such ilk that prey as leeches upon mankind. The conditions that suckled these societies were fear and ignorance. Remove the cause, and the disease is cured. Young, intelligent Italians were taken into the police force, trained, and then assigned back into their own sections, where they gained the respect and confidence of their countrymen. The better element of Italians, themselves great enemies of the Mafia lent their cooperation and support. Education and enlightenment replaced fear-bred tradition and misdirected obligation. No longer was "Little Italy" to be subjected to the oppression and domination of *omerta*, that "honorable silence" that sealed the lips of Sicilian and Italian whenever the police were involved. The Mafia, thriving in darkness and secrecy, wilted and became impotent when faced with daylight and publicity. The New Orleans police had a tangible enemy to fight and short work was made in stamping it out. Efforts were made to keep it alive in Dallas, in New York, in Philadelphia, but the heart and brain were destroyed and the method of dealing with it was known. Its end was as drab and uncolorful as its existence had been explosive and spectacular. Long did it thrive; long may it be dead!

But, is it?.

11

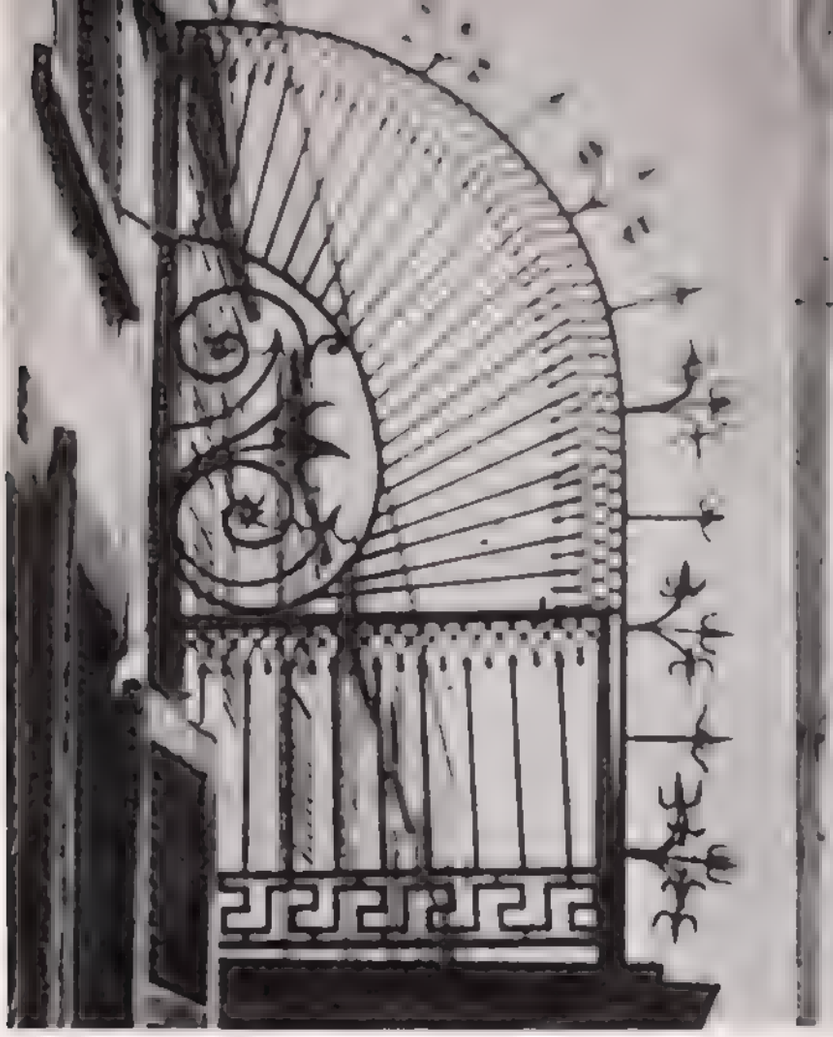
CURSE OF THE CREOLES

During the twenty years before the Civil War and for an even longer period afterward crime of all kinds in New Orleans other than that for which the Mafia was responsible was on a level never approximated anywhere else. Every day newspapers were filled with reports of murder, robberies, and the activities of gangs. It was common knowledge that two-thirds of the homicides of the underworld districts were unreported or the bodies of the victims never found. The New Orleans correspondent of the New York *Tribune* reported on January 30, 1855, that "murders here are an everyday occurrence." Three years later the New Orleans *Bee* said, "it is most true that our city has been infected by a band of desperadoes who have shed innocent blood and spread terror and consternation." One of the avowed purposes and important reasons for the formation of the Vigilance Committee was to punish and eliminate the criminal element that the police had been unable or unwilling to cope with. But with the exception of the favorable effect it might have had on the election procedure and the elimination of the Hennessey conspirators there is little to indicate that the Committee accomplished very much. There was no abatement in crime, nor was any lasting reform made in the police system, as a result of its activities.

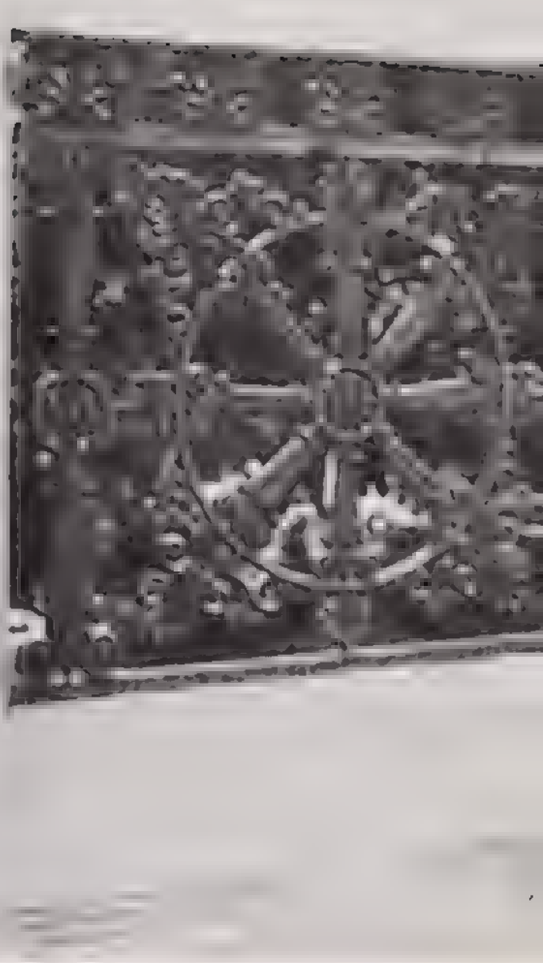
Until comparatively recent times the police system of New Orleans was not as police are known universally today. Without

uniforms until after the Civil War, inefficiently organized, underpaid, and subject to no discipline, they made little pretense of protecting the lives and property of the citizens. Patrolmen openly supplemented their inadequate incomes with bribes and tributes that they exacted from the underworld, reported for duty when they felt like it, and often were a part of the criminal element they should have opposed. The police were but an integral arc in the periphery of a shameful circle of apathetic populace, corrupt political component, and unhampered and uninhibited criminal element. In the peculiar society that was New Orleans their ineptitude and inadequacy was symptomatic rather than basic. Regardless of the cause, the result was that without the restraints and control of normal police function New Orleans was "wide open" in all respects—which apparently was what most everybody wanted.

Like so many other of the sins for which New Orleans has been deservedly accused, and which could flower as they did only with the help or approval of the police, gambling came in with the first colonists, and it has been a matter of concern to the public officials ever since. The direction of this concern has as often taken the flavor of approval as it has of disapproval. In earlier days gambling was private, but in later years nearly every ballroom, café, and coffee house which appeared as the city grew in wealth and importance had its special gambling-rooms open to the public replete with all the requisites. After the Louisiana Purchase gambling was a side-street business until 1827, when John Davis, the builder and owner of the Orleans Ballroom on Orleans Street, where the Quadroon Balls were held, opened up a spacious, elegant, and luxurious gambling-hall at the corner of Orleans and Bourbon, near the Ballroom. This, as did most other Davis enterprises, became an immediate and spectacular success. Open seven days per week and twenty-four hours a day, it became the center for the indulgences of the Creole passion for gambling which was their dominating vice. Croupiers and dealers were imported from Europe and any game of chance known to the times could be played there. The most popular were faro, roulette, and vingt-et-un, from which came the American blackjack. There was no limit, and on Sunday evenings the patrons were



Distinctive *garde de frise* on the balcony of the Seignouret building, 520 Royal Street.



Frenchtown cast iron door panel.

An underground tunnel recently discovered behind the Seignouret building. Not far from the Napoleon House and the old Capitol its use was unknown.

Spanish-Creole architecture at 536 Royal Street.

the guests of the house at dinner which featured the finest of vintages and viands.

For years gambling was alternately legalized or verboten, according to the whims of the incumbent politicians or their ideas about the most successful means of exacting graft. In 1835 the State Legialature passed a law making the operator of a gambling-house liable to a fine of ten thousand dollars and to imprisonment of from one to five years. This caused gamblers to close their doors, but that was the only change in their method of operation. They merely paid protection and continued as before. A bonanza struck New Orleans in 1846 when it became the principal base of operations for the American Army in the war with Mexico. This prosperity continued with the transient population of the gold rush of 1849, and gambling-houses sprang up all over Frenchtown and the rest of the city. The most famous of these were the Davis Gambling Salon on Orleans Street, the Merchant's Exchange at 126 Royal Street, and Maspero's Exchange at Chartres and St. Louis Streets.

Up until this time gambling had been confined to the rich and reckless classes, but shrewd operators, realizing the tremendous potential in the masses, introduced a game called "Keno." They convinced the authorities that this was merely a harmless amusement and not gambling. Keno was inexpensive and it took the city by storm. Royal and Chartres Streets literally broke out with Keno clubs. In three years everybody had the fever,—men, women, and children alike. The places became nuisances, however, and the city authorities finally were forced to pass a law revoking all licenses and forbidding the playing of Keno anywhere in the city, even privately. The authorities tried to enforce this law, but the game retained its popularity, and despite their efforts it spread all over the United States. Today we know it as Bingo.

At the beginning of the Civil War all of the larger houses closed up and remained closed until the time that "Silver Spoon" Butler permitted them to reopen upon payment of the proper fee. General Butler's successors kept them closed until the Federal troops evacuated the city and turned it over to the solicitous care of the carpetbaggers, when the floodgates were

again opened. The Legislature of 1869 legalized gambling and spawned an organization that made it possible for every man, woman, and child in the United States to participate. In return for an annual contribution of forty thousand dollars for the support of the Charity Hospital, an exclusive twenty-year charter was given to the Lousiana State Lottery Company. Selling tickets for as little as ten cents to as high as forty dollars, and offering fabulous prizes, the company had a difficult start but experienced a phenomenal growth, acquiring great wealth and tremendous political power. Through judicious use of funds it was able to keep operating, and despite diligent and determined opposition it remained in existence until 1893, when it was driven out of the country to Honduras. There is continued until 1907.

The Louisiana Lottery Company also originated and had a monopoly on the policy game that is still played all over the country today, especially among Negroes. Rivalling and exceeding Keno in popularity, policy-playing became universal. Offices were opened in the principal sections of the city, and one on Royal Street had a continuous line of whites and Negroes waiting to wager their nickels, dimes, and quarters. New Orleans was a city gone mad, crazy with the gambling fever.

Gambling-houses by the score sprang up over night as soon as the Legislature let down the bars. Slick operators flocked into the city from all over the United States. New Orleans, and particularly Frenchtown, bloomed into a vast gambling Gehenna. Any game of chance or variation was available. Front doors opened directly on the streets, and come-ons and shills ran up and down Royal and Bourbon Streets, which were lined with houses, trying to entice players inside. Competition became so intense that the majority of the places became hangouts for criminals. The local gamblers, who had so anxiously awaited legal sanction for their operations, saw that it was their undoing. Banding together, they reversed themselves, and they began to lobby for repeal of the law that permitted them to do business. They were successful, and the next Legislature declared gambling illegal. All places were closed while the police and natural forces ridded the city of the undesirable element. Then the better operators made their peace and

appropriate arrangements with the authorities and were back in business again.

Notice, when you get money changed in New Orleans today, how much of it is in nickels. Look around, whever you are, at the ubiquitous and omnipresent one-way mechanical bandits waiting for you. And this does not mean parking meters!

12

WINE, WOMEN, AND WRONG

A rather general belief prevails outside of New Orleans, perhaps with sufficient reason, that the French Quarter was at one time a restricted red-light district. This is not so. It is true, however, that New Orleans did have a special section set aside for the pursuit of pleasure, known as Storyville. Although it was located quite nearby, no part of it was within the boundaries of the Vieux Carré. But, Frenchtown did have areas within its confines that for sheer depravity, viciousness, and degeneracy had no equal anywhere.

One of these sections that competes in infamy with Sodom and Gomorrah, the sewers of Singapore and Shanghai, and, in this country, the Barbary Coast of San Francisco, was Gallatin Street. Today, without doubt one of the most peaceful and innocuous streets in the whole city, it is occupied chiefly by warehouses and storage-rooms for the merchants of the French Market nearby. But from around 1840 through the Civil War, and to about 1875, it was the lowest, rottenest, toughest, most festering cesspool that could be imagined. Only two blocks long, running from Ursulines to Barracks Street near the water-front, it was the center of a bawdy section that overflowed into Decatur, North Peters, and other streets nearby. As if it could not stand the light of day, the section was closed and quiet from dawn to dark. But, as evening approached, doors opened for business, and the sinkholes of sin ran full blast until the first light of morning, when the shades were drawn and the

district turned in to sleep off its dissipation and to recuperate.

This highly concentrated area of wickedness—aptly known as the "Sewer"—was made up of every kind of cheap-joint, boozery, dance den, and harlot-heaven known to the dregs of mankind. They all catered to one thing—vice. There was not a single legitimate business in the area. Variety was offered only in detail and degree. To name it was to have it, if it was low enough. Here was found the lowest type of groggery known, the barrel-house. This was a mass-scale, happy-water dispensary, usually located in a narrow building that took its name from the row of barrels with spigots lining one side of the street floor room. The barrels contained beer, wine, cheap whiskey, and rum. On the other side of the room were long tables, loaded with heavy glass tumblers or earthern mugs that a customer in search of solace picked up and quaffed from, after paying the proper fee. If he didn't drink fast enough, out he went, to make room for someone who would. When he reached a sufficient degree of mental befuddlement he was inveigled or dragged into the alley and relieved of what money he had left. If there was any resistance or argument he was put out of the way and his body was rolled into the river to be carried out into the Gulf with no-one the wiser. It is estimated that not a night went by without at least one such fatal slugging.

One step above the barrel-house grogshop was the concert café, the forerunner of our present night club. This guzzle-gutter provided a dance floor, a rough platform where crude entertainment such as the can-can and "poses by live models" were offered, and tables at which patrons could sit with the girls of the place. These girls, called "B" girls. waited on the trade at the tables and served a different kind of commodity in the special upstairs rooms. They were paid no salaries, but received a commission on the drinks they served and were permitted to keep all the gratuities they could garner.

With an eye to modern methods of merchandising, there were a few places called "boarding houses" and "sailors' rests," where a seaman could get a package deal or kind of one-stop service of a beer, a biddy, and a bed, for just four bits. There was a good chance that he might also wake up

some time later with a throbbing headache in the hold of an unfamiliar ship bound for strange places. Yellowed and fragile newspapers give accounts of the disappearance of many a gay young local blade sowing his first wild oats on Gallatin Street, and later record his delayed and subsequent arrival in a foreign port.

The regular patrons of the Sewer were the backwash, derelicts, and riff-raff usually found in any seaport waterfront. They came from the country, the gutters of large cities, and off the strange ships that hoveto in the harbor. Lascar, Portugee, and Oriental met Latin, Scandinavian, and low-caliber American, all of one mind—to get stewed, wooed, and tattoed—the universal sailor's holiday. They all came into the Sewer in search of diversion, drink, and dames, listed in the order of their increasing importance. Ready and eager to accomodate them was a motley horde of harpies, pimps, sneak theives, pickpockets, and cutthroats. Strangers in town, particularly during the Carnival season, gave the authorities nightmares, for these visitors were like sitting ducks to the bistro barons. In New Orleans for a good time, they usually had more money than the regular Sewer habitué. In one way or another the Sewer rats contrived to get all the money the visitors had. If they complained to the police they were met with a shrug of the shoulders. Usually when they were robbed or beaten they were so embarrassed that they wanted to swallow their shame and charge it off to experience rather than make any trouble about it. A large number of this class of people wound up in the river, or were shanghaied after being robbed and beaten. Many an empty room in an uptown hotel was a mute reminder that its transient occupant in search of a thrill in Gallatin Street had come to the end of the line there. To the police another unsolved disappearance went into the books, and some distraught family, perhaps hundreds of miles away, forever afterward mourned the absence of a father, brother, or son. If by some inadvertence a victim managed to get outside of the clip-joint with money left he still had to run the gauntlet of the garroter with his strangling cord and the footpad whose tool of trade was the slingshot, a leather thong with lead weights at the end. There was sin, absolute and utter, in every inch of

The so-called Governor Miro home, on the left, which escaped the fire of 1794. Its balcony railing is of cast iron but appears to be wrought iron. Building on the right also has a cast iron balcony railing.

Gallatin Street. It was the unsung boast of the district that no-one except a superman could start at one end of the section with a dollar and have both money and his life when he reached the other side.

The Sewer made its own law. The regular police, such as they were, never ventured into the section—they didn't dare. Misunderstandings and altercations in the Sewer were resolved with knives, knockout drops, pistols, fists, brass knucks, and teeth. Many a hapless reveler, his wariness dulled by rotten grog, abandoned discretion to assert himself, and was put away with a bungstarter, a huge heavy wooden iron-bound hammer ordinarily used to pound a spigot into a keg.

The most notorious and most numerous of the dives in the Sewer were the dance-halls. These were of the same general nature as the concert cafés except no regular or formal entertainment was given. These pleasure-palaces were all very much alike. The downstairs was usually divided into two rooms. In the front room was a bar and in the larger back room the dance-hall. Upstairs, the second and third stories were partitioned off into small rooms and rented by the night to strumpets who worked off the streets, and weekly to the house harpies who obtained their business from the dance-hall itself. Each dance-hall had its quota of bouncers, whose duty it was to see that the patrons were well supplied with drinks and other services of the establishment, to maintain order in the place—ha! —and to dispose of anyone whose funds were depleted and therefore of no further interest to the firm. Big bruisers, scarred by many earlier encounters, they wore brass knuckles on both hands and had belaying-pins and knives ready within easy reach. Music, so-called, for dancing was provided by a tinny, tinkling piano and fiddle, and sometimes an added trumpet or trombone.

It is technically incorrect to use the word dancing in this sense, for what it amounted to in these places was merely a meeting of a him and a whore to arrange for an assignation. In this case, stripped of all non-essentials, negotiations were reduced to the absolute in directness. They amounted only to a question with one answer. The word "no" was unknown. In most cases there was no necessity for any negotiation at all.

In the dance-halls the strumpets wore their hair down, a pair of slippers, and a calico dress—that was all. Each dance-hall maintained a stable of from ten to thirty regulars, which was augmented by women from the street or nearby brothels when the demand warranted.

Like the "B" girls, the regular house-hussies received no pay from the dance-hall proprietors for their services, but the opportunities for prostitution and for stealing were so great that these staff berths were eagerly sought after. A bawd winning a bunk in any of the dance-halls was assured of a capacity business, so great was the lust traffic in the Sewer. Part of the understanding with her landlord was that she must cooperate in every way possible in selling liquor for the house. Only the first drink or two served to a customer was full-strength; after that they were progressively watered, to keep the patron on his feet and spending for as long as possible. If something slipped and he became too drunk he was robbed and thrown out.

The depths of depravity reached in these sinkholes was described by a reporter of the New Orleans *Times* in 1869. Referring to Gallatin Street, he states that "the dances were so abandoned and reckless that the can-can in comparison seemed maidenly and respectable." In the same article he speaks of the dancers as being in a "state of awful nudity." Such a state was not unusual on Gallatin Street. Aroused by the excitement of the music and the steady flow of liquor that was poured into them, the sisters of sin frequently pulled off their dresses and danced around naked. The next step was for many of the besotted males to do the same, and then all restraint was gone.

Another area of vice and degeneracy with a concentration of opportunity and brazenness of operation sufficient to create the impression of legal sanction, which competed with Gallatin Street for pre-eminence in depravity, was a portion of the Vieux Carré, appropriately dubbed "Rotten Row" by some early and imaginative reporter. Centered on Dauphine and Burgundy and the crossing streets between Canal and Toulouse, this inconceivably disgraceful and shameful civic sore carried on for nearly thirty-five years until 1890, and was a cheaper if not more degraded area than the Sewer. In the Row there was no color line, Negro cribs competed on an even basis with

Court of the Two Sisters, a popular restaurant. Banana leaves in the upper right. Banana and date trees grow in New Orleans but the fruit does not ripen.

"Sam George's House," on the Five Shockspen. This building was the scene of one of George W. Cable's most entertaining stories.

the white slutteries, and patrons were of all races and colors. So common was the fraternization of white man and colored woman, and of white girl and Negro man, that it was denounced in at least two local newspapers.

The whole area literally crawled with flagellantes, pimps, panderers, low-level tarts, and all varieties of that irregular sexual stratum covered by the word "queer." Circuses and other erotic exhibitions were the specialty of the section, and they would be put on in private or publicly at the drop of a suggestion. The bordellos themselves were like their tenants. The lowest kind were furnished merely with a bed, one chair, and a wash-basin. The occupants of the houses sat just inside the door, dressed only in low-cut wrappers, and when a man passed the hustler exerted all of her wiles, displaying as much of her merchandise as she felt necessary to entice the prospect inside. Rates were from twenty-five to fifty cents, and a certain reputable reporter wrote that many bawds not having permanent quarters carried a blanket and accommodated their customers on the banquette at the cut-rate of fifteen cents, in full view of angry competitors and passers-by. It is said that the jealous chippies who had the expenses of maintaining a place of business considered this unfair competition and kept a pail of water handy to discourage the activity of these roving rips.

The lowest point of Rotten Row, and the absolute nadir of perdition, was on Burgundy Street between Bienville and Conti. Here there were a number of ramshackle old shacks, filthy and unclean to an unbelievable degree, with shutters held together with rope, which were inhabited by Negro prostitutes of indeterminate age. When not snarling and fighting with one another they sat in their doorways dressed in dirty slips and smoking corncob pipes. If any man dared to show even a vestige of self-respect and resisted the lures of these harpies he was followed by strident screams of foul invective and abuse. There were so many robberies and complaints from this block that it became too much even for New Orleans, and the police had to take some action. Besides, the take had begun to fall off. In August 1885 they raided this block of blazes and closed it up.

On a slightly higher level of degenerate society, but surely as disgusting and revolting, was the trollop traffic or white slavery that of necessity flourished in New Orleans. The local business was part of a syndicate that had branches in other large cities, and served not only to provide new recruits but to rotate the regulars of the plush-sofa horde, so that new stock and variety was always on hand to please the customers. This did not operate openly but usually behind the respectable front of a reputable business. The highest premium was for the virgin variety, and the most successful provider of this particular and choice commodity was one Mary Thompson, who ran a cigar store on Royal Street as a front for her racket. Spanish Agnes, another trollop trader, operated a beauty shop, and Louisa Murphy, a school teacher, were also notoriously successful in recruiting and training what was known as "fresh stock" to the trade.

The tolerance with which prostitution was regarded and its general acceptance by the people caused the lust traffic to thrive like an unrestrained weed. Word passed that the latch-string was out, and New Orleans had a gold rush of its own. Madames, bawds, and fancy men converged on the city in flocks and immediately set up in business. New brothels sprouted with each passing day until they threatened to overrun the city. The authorities were faced with the realization that without some control vice would soon stifle and suffocate all normal endeavors.

A new era dawned in the history of harlotry in 1897, when Alderman Sidney Story, who had made a careful study of the methods of controlling prostitution in European cities, succeeded in having an ordinance passed by the City Council that restricted vice to a definite district. This district, just outside of the French Quarter on the northwest or woodside, was within the area bounded by Customhouse (now Iberville), Robertson, St. Louis, and Basin Streets. Within this special district the brothels could operate unmolested provided they didn't become too boisterous and no crimes were committed. Immediately those establishments outside of the district moved into the sanctioned section, and in a few years it became the most celebrated vice district in the country and the shame and

The Labranche building, one of the most photographed structures in the French Quarter, now occupied by the "House of the Artists," is the focal point of an

in Frenchtown and New Orleans.

39. Bruin Street showing the Casa Flechin (No 613 Bruin St, Filmmakers's Tavern, and the site of Le Spectacle.

Courtyard of the Casa Flechin now a delightful spot open to the public where fine drinks can be enjoyed.

scandal of a proud city. Much to the annoyance of the man who had created it, the district was called "Storyville." It remained until 1917 when it was closed by the federal government as a war measure. Soldiers cannot fight if they are incapacitated by disease, and Storyville was as great a menace to our fighting men as the foreign enemy.

Some of the more pretentious places in Storyville employed a regular orchestra to entertain the guests. Young colored musicians, discovering that the tourists who visited the district were liberal with tips, formed into small groups and toured the area, giving impromptu performances on the streets. Their instruments, usually homemade, consisted of fiddle, wash basin, washboard, and harmonica, but their rhythms were unique, catchy, and original. They called themselves "spasm bands." Some still appear today on the streets of Frenchtown, where they will perform for whatever offering is forthcoming. These groups also became known as "jazzy bands" and an enterprising promoter, realizing their possibilities, arranged for public appearances. The public approved of their rhythms, beats, and improvisations, and from this humble start came what the youngsters know today as jazz and swing music. Some of the music of Storyville was written down and a few of the better compositions have survived, among them "Basin Street Blues," named after the most famous thoroughfare of the district. When Storyville was closed the name was changed; but recently, realizing the curiosity aroused by the name, the city fathers changed the section of the street that was in the district back to Basin Street. It is located just off Canal Street above Rampart, in back of the Southern Railway Station, but it no longer has any of its former glory or glitter. As for the song "Basin Street Blues," it still helps to keep the name famous. Many are the chaste young maidenly lips that have sung the words entirely unaware of the meaning behind them, and myriads of the pure have played and danced to the rhythms without having the least idea of their origin.

In order that visitors to Storyville might know of the goings-on and the precise attractions that were available, an official hundred-page directory and guidebook could be purchased for twenty-five cents. Known as the "Blue Book," four and a half

inches by six inches in size, it listed in alphabetical order the names, addresses, color, and special qualifications of the prostitutes, together with the addresses and distinctive features of the brothels themselves. It also contained liquor and cigar ads as well as an occasional notice of a lawyer, patent medicine, or vendor of jewelry. But the most intriguing feature of the Blue Book's contents, apart from the enticing illustrations showing rococo inside-views of the sin suites themselves, were the puffs lauding the graces and qualifications of the leading voluptuaries.

Here are a few random excerpts:

"Nowhere in this country will you find a more complete and thorough sporting house than the Arlington."

"Miss Burt, while very young, is of a type that pleases most men of today. Don't forget to converse with her, as she is clever, jolly and cultured."

"Pretty women, good time and sociability has been adopted as the motto of Miss Bradford's new and costly home."

"Here is one whole-souled member of the fair sex who is sterling. She has a lot of jolly good girls as guests, who are indeed superfine. Don't overlook Cora."

"While nothing is too good for May, she is admired and befriended by all who come in contact with her."

"Her patrons are of the first-class or she will have none."

"Everything goes here. Pleasure is the watchword."

This all had its start in New Orleans as early as 1721, when the French King sent over a shipload of girls taken from a house of correction in Paris. There were eighty-eight in the first contingent and Governor Bienville said of them, "Nineteen of them have been married off. . . ten have died. So that fifty-nine girls are still to be provided for. This will be difficult as these girls were not well selected. . . . Whatever the vigilance exercised upon them, they could not be restrained."

Lyle Saxon exclaims, "How tantalizing this is! It gives an interesting insight into the behavior of the girls." Another writer implies that the remaining girls were not long unprovided for, as Bienville had feared. Someone who appreciated the market value of their peculiar talents came forth to relieve the Governor of the cause for his concern, and a new branch

of an old industry was started. Confined at first to the outlying areas around Dauphine and Burgundy Streets, with an occasional so-called high-class place slipping into and aloofly functioning on Royal or Chartres Streets, the traffic was carried on in a quiet, prudent manner for many years. But under the Americans this all changed, and vice became so lucrative that the corrupt politicians and officials became financially interested in many of the larger houses. Brothels ranging from the two-bit Negro crib to the elaborate hundred-dollar red-plush and gilt luxury passion-palace operated openly on nearly every street in Frenchtown. Although the big pay-off went to the higher-ups, the policeman on the beats were taken care of with a token percentage of the night's take, left on the doorsteps in the morning. A reporter with a penchant for alliteration once called New Orleans "the land of love and luscious lechery."

13

AH, FRENCHTOWN!

Frenchtown! It has had its days, and they have left their scars. One does not have to look far or too closely to find them. It was in the scheme of things that change would have to come. The Quarter had to give way somewhere, either to be assimilated and forgotten or to make adjustments and survive. It wisely chose to adjust and so to age gracefully. Resentment and antagonism kept the Creoles from associating with the Americans any more than was absolutely necessary. The Creoles did business with the Americans when it could not be avoided, but they refused to bring the newcomers into their homes and resisted their efforts to settle in Frenchtown. Excluded from the French Quarter, the Americans settled in the area that is now the uptown section of the city, while the Creoles remained by themselves in the Old Square downtown. Had it not been for this aloofness and resistance by the Creoles the Americans undoubtedly would have infiltrated the *carré de la ville* (town square), commercialized it, and destroyed its character and individuality. Frenchtown would have been forever lost instead of being preserved today in all its dignity and pride. The height of its glory and importance was reached about a quarter of a century before the Civil War and by the end of this contest the Quarter had started into a decline. But this was a lengthy and drawn-out process, as are almost all social changes. Ten years after the War haughty Creoles, with their ladies, still resisted the inevitable, and boasted that

Arch and gate to Pitzhanger's Tavern. The balconies on the left are typical of quarters formerly occupied by slaves that served the owner in the main house in the West Indies. Now restored and redecorated they are highly desirable residences.

629 Bourbon Street.

they had never so much as left the confines of the Vieux Carre. The average Creole gentleman rarely strayed more than two or three squares away from his favorite gambling-house.

But destiny will not be thwarted. The Gallatin Streets and the Rotten Rows and the Mafia activities all came and ran their course. Children grew up, free of the prejudices, animosities, and motivations of their elders, and moved out of the Quarter. Many of the older families did likewise and the old city began to show signs of physical as well as social decline. By the turn of the century this trend was well established. Repairs were not made promptly to the houses and as a natural consequence rental incomes depreciated. With lower rents there came an influx of Negroes and Italian immigrants. As a result the Vieux Carré began to be referred to as the Italian Quarter. People shook their heads sadly and sighed, saying that the Quarter had become a slum; was a disgrace to the city.

But the French Quarter never did become a slum. It had its hard times, that is true, but a slum indicates an area where there has been a breakdown of spirit as well as of the physical. People who live in slums do so because they are forced to, because the slums are cheap. Even through her worst periods, the Quarter was not completely deserted by people of culture. There were always those who stood by and lived in the Vieux Carré because they wanted to and not because of economic compulsion. Their presence in sufficient numbers and influence retained for the Quarter that flavor and dignity and strength that made it survive.

It was not until after World War 1 that New Orleans discovered what an asset it had in Frenchtown as a tourist attraction. To the group who had always lived in, and remained loyal to, the French Quarter, and to the sound-minded businessmen who realized what it meant to New Orleans business and who fought for and got rules for its preservation and protection, we owe the existence of Frenchtown as it is now. The Quarter went through an extremely trying time during the national depression. Rents declined further, and for years the only repairs made were those absolutely necessary. Many buildings remained vacant and the tone of the Old Square dropped materially.

This changed with the Second World War. New Orleans became a major seaport, a leading training and embarkation point, and an important manufacturing center for war materials. People flocking into the city could not find living-quarters and the Old Square quickly filled to overflowing. Rents skyrocketed and property values increased tremendously. The slave quarters in the rear of the courtyards as well as the main dwelling became highly desirable through necessity. The Vieux Carré had a period of prosperity like the good old days. After the war, with property values way up, it settled down to being a tourist attraction again, a mission that it continues to perform in a highly creditable manner.

The earliest houses in the colony were low, single-story huts, constructed of lumber roughly hewn from the cypress swamps nearby. A more pretentious and substantial type of construction was called *briquettes entre poteaux,* "bricks between posts," many examples of which still exist in the Old Square. Bricks were made within the limits of the city near the outskirts. The Moorish style of architecture of Spain had its greatest impetus after the great fires of 1788 and 1796, when so much of the city was destroyed and had to be rebuilt. Spanish Governors wisely required that all new construction be fireproof insofar as possible. Entire buildings were built of brick and many of more than one story. Tile imported from France and Spain replaced the rough cypress-shingle roofs. Timbers for beams and other purposes had to have official approval before they could be installed. This was to insure that no unseasoned or decayed lumber was used; and as a further precaution it was also required that all logs for construction purposes be cut at specified periods of the year and, strange as it now seems, under certain phases of the moon.

Clay to make the bricks that went into these early buildings came out of the banks of the river. Mortar for separating and sealing the bricks, comparing in hardness and durability with the best produced today, was mixed from lime made by burning the seashells found in large quantities in Lake Pontchartrain. Bricks and mortar were both subject to erosion, so to protect the buildings from the rain and wind the outside walls were covered with plaster. Many places can be seen around the

Quarter today where the outside plaster has fallen away and the exposed bricks and mortar are being worn away by the elements.

The early wooden houses of the French were built on piles to keep them off the damp ground, which became flooded very quickly after a rain. The water-level was only a foot or two beneath the surface, so burials had to be above ground until the fabulous sewer and drainage system that now keeps the city clean and dry was set up, just before the turn of the century. Frequently the river confined within the levees rose higher than the city. Whenever this happened, sluice-gates cut into the river dikes were opened, letting water into the city which rushed through the ditches of the Square and flushed them out. It then flowed away from the river toward Lake Ponchartrain, a phenomenon peculiar to New Orleans. When the ditches were full of water the city squares were entirely surrounded, becoming little islands, which then as now were called "islets" by the natives.

Whatever may be said of the Spaniards as colonists, they did build their Nueva Orleans for utility and comfort. The ground floor of a house was given over to the business of the owner, while the upstairs was the family living-quarters. Each residence was built flush with the banquettes, its back on the street and its front yard in the rear. This type of construction is said to be particularly adapted for hot climates. The courtyard is the area in the rear of the house, surrounded by high walls. Some courtyards are completely paved with flagstones, but the larger ones have grass-covered areas with tables, fountains, flower beds, large trees, stone walks, and statues. Along one side is the *garconnière* and the slave quarters, with a carriage-house and stables at the rear. Entrance to the courtyard was gained through a tunnel-like porte-cochere on the side of the house opposite the slave quarters, one story high and wide enough to permit the passage of a coach and horses. The patio, usually smaller, is an area within the walls of the house itself. The patio is a Spanish survival, while the courtyard is French. Most of the courtyards are kept closed and strict privacy is maintained, but a great many of them are regularly left open, and their owners welcome visitors who

want to come in and browse about. During the annual Spring Fiesta many of the genuine Creole homes still occupied by the aristocratic and dynastic survivors of the *ancien regime* are open to the public, and visitors are privileged to enter and see priceless antiques amidst authentic settings of past grandeur. The sometimes grim and forbidding facades of the fading and weatherstained buildings rarely give any indication of what may be found behind. Alongside a patrician, treasure-packed entrenchment of the last outpost of Creole supremacy may be found the abode of a large colored family or perhaps the scantily-furnished rooms for those of plebian occupations.

It has been said that the ruling passion of the Creoles was gambling. It was not their only passion. Their Latin heritage gave them certain inherent characteristics which they attempted neither to conceal nor deny. Their realistic and fundamental attitude was occasionally manifested in practices which today seem deflections from what is right and proper. A vestige of one of the strange facets of Frenchtown life is the *garconniere*, that odd structure which is peculiar to the French Quarter and found in so many of its old houses. The very name is a clue to its early use. Derived from the French word *garcon*, meaning "boy," it applies to a small structure usually separated from the main house, between it and the slave quarters. Used by the younger members of the family as a nursery, schoolroom, or playhouse, it could quickly be made to accomodate guests who could find no quarters in the main house. As the young men of the family approached manhood the *garconnière* was converted into a sort of bachelor quarters where young Creoles could have separate rooms, and at the proper time a new phase of their education and development began. With the help and guidance of Papa Creole, a shapely young female slave was selected, usually one who was a little older than the young man, to share his quarters and assist him in acquiring knowledge and experience. Offspring of these alliances were turned over to the slaves to be raised and upon reaching maturity were given their freedom, joining that in-between social stratum known as "gens de couleur," or "free colored."

Unquestionable the most unusual characteristic of the French Quarter and one of the first things that strikes the eye of the

The Le Petit Maison or House of the Turk about which is told the romantic
stories of love and tragedy.

The famed Orleans Ballroom which has had a most colorful history for over a century. Once the State Legislative Hall, and the locale of the Quadroon Balls, it is now a convent.

visitor is the splendor of the picturesque balconies, with their exquisite railings and adornments of wrought and cast iron. Extending over the streets from the upper-story living quarters, the balconies permitted an escape into the delightful coolness of the New Orleans evenings. In the daytime during the summer the New Orleans climate is oppressively hot and himid, but as soon as the sun goes down a delightful balminess and serenity settle upon the city. House interiors do not respond to this vespertine blessing immediately but remain hot until far into the night; so the balcony became the means of escape and deliverance. Railings were placed around the edges of the balconies to prevent occupants from falling into the streets below. Wrought iron for them was beaten out by slaves, particularly those from Santo Domingo, who were skilled iron workers. It is said that the slaves of Jean Lafitte fabricated some of the more desirable designs at the blacksmith shop on Bourbon and St. Philip Streets. Much of the wrought iron was imported from Spain, but New Orleans produced many very unusual works of the ironmonger's art from its own forges. The period of wrought iron dates from the great fires of 1788 and 1796. Cast iron came into favor about twenty-five years later. Wrought iron is made from material with a low carbon content and is not susceptible to rust. On the other hand, cast iron contains a greater degree of carbon and is subject to rust, and it must therefore be kept painted to protect its beauty and prolong its life. Besides balcony railings, decorative iron is used for gates, doors, brackets underneath balconies to provide support, *gardes de frise* and grilles, many beautiful examples of which may be seen throughout Frenchtown.

Some historical landmarks have unfortunately been lost because of neglect, disinterest, or lack of zoning ordinances. But in 1936 an amendment was added to the State Constitution providing for the preservation and protection of historical buildings and sections. A commission formed to look after the Vieux Carré has done some fine work. The early French and Spanish Governors required that builders file plans of structures they were going to build. The Commission now requires that any buildings or repairs to existing structures be made in accordance with these original sketches. This insures that the

French Quarter will be preserved for the enjoyment of visitors for many decades to come.

The boundaries of the French Quarter—Canal Street, Rampart Street, and the Esplanade—were formerly lined with fortifications and moats. When the palisades were torn down and the moats filled up the space was used to make three wide streets. Canal Street is now the main street of New Orleans. Rampart Street earned its name because it was the site of the longest stockade or rampart around Frenchtown. The Esplanade, now Esplanade Avenue, was an area used by French and Spanish society for strolling and horseback riding. It became a stylish and exclusive residential area in the late 1830's and has many unusual homes with striking ironwork that have been kept in a splendid state of repair. Tall and flowing trees spread their shade like gigantic, protecting mother-hens and give the street a coolness, a grace and a dreamy magnificence that has been its characteristic for over a hundred years.

At various spots attached to trees throughout Frenchtown, but certainly not confined to it, can be seen that intriguing caprice of nature and trademark of the deep South, Spanish moss. This is a complete misnomer, for it is not Spanish nor is it moss, but rather a member of the pineapple family, to which it bears no resemblance whatever. To some the appearance of this peculiar plant, with its long, pendulous garlands, is picturesque; to others it is weird and foreboding. In the deep swamps, where it grows prolifically, it provides a perfect setting for intrigue and mystery. A native of the United States from Virginia to Florida and westward to Texas, it undoubtedly takes its name from the fact that it was discovered by the early Spanish explorers, not because they brought it with them. The early French called it "Spaniard's beard," and the early Spanish in retaliation called it the "Frenchman's wig."

From the branches of pine, oak, and cypress trees, which it seems to prefer, its strands normally hang down from three to four feet, but they sometimes reach a length of from twenty to thirty feet. A peculiar feature of the plant is that it apparently has no beginning and no end. There are many delicate tendrils of such a wispy and elusive nature, that it is difficult to determine where and how it is attached to the tree, and

where the multiple festoons terminate in the air. The moss needs the tree simply as something to attach itself to and to keep it in the air. It is an epiphyte, taking its sustenance from the air, and is not a parasite, for it takes nothing from the tree to which it is attached. It does no damage to the tree except possibly to obscure the sun from the leaves or to add weight to the limbs. Some of the larger trees carry a load of from twenty to twenty-five tons of the moss on their branches. It will not grow on a dead tree because the tendrils cannot attach themselves to the dead bark. If a tree with moss on it dies, the moss will soon die, itself turning black as if in mourning.

When the outer covering of the moss is removed, a hard, cord-like center resembling horsehair is revealed. This is used as a stuffing for upholstered furniture and mattresses, and for other uses. Growing rapidly and easily, Spanish moss is a bonanza crop to the part-time worker of the South. It is a perfect crop, for it needs no plowing, planting, fertilizing, or cultivating, and yet it can be harvested at any time of the year. It is unaffected by the vagaries of the weather or the whims of fate. It is a three million dollar a year industry to the deep South.

Look for the delicate greenish-gray filaments of Spanish moss on the trees of Frenchtown. Pull some from the trees and examine it, preferably under a magnifying glass. Look at the tiny, trumpet-shaped flowers and at the joints of the segments. Break the stem to reveal the center fiber that is used for commercial purposes.

Perhaps the best time for a first sight of Frenchtown is late afternoon, for then the oblique rays of the sun are weak and more tolerant of the defects of the old buildings. If one is fortunate enough to run into a spasm band of washboard, harmonica, homemade banjo, or whatever musical device individual ingenuity has conjured up, it will be an exciting and long-remembered event. In the Quarter one meets businessman, artist, writer, prostitute, merchant, sailor, beggar, and thief. It is one place where no questions are asked, where people go to live their own lives. All of the old and most of the famous restaurants are in the French Quarter, and for the

person fond of sea food Frenchtown has the best. One does not have to go far to find an oyster bar where a thriving business is still done, even as in older days when Creole blades fortified and assured their virility and manhood with frequent and sizable portions of raw oysters. Yes, every block in Frenchtown will be found teeming with interest.

The tourist trade is a well-organized business of barkers, guides, rubberneck busses, rubber-tired, pony-drawn carts, lecturers, black mammies in costume, pralines (a delicious Creole confection made of sugar and pecans), postcard racks, guidebooks, and souvenirs. This is conducted in a dignified manner and in no way detracts from, and in many ways adds to, the charm of the old city. The residents of the Quarter and those not directly concerned with the tourist trade show tolerant amusement at gaping visitors in tow of professional pointer-outers, and they go serenely about their daily business, either concealing a smug pride in superior knowledge which they are willing to share, or else blissfully and entirely unaware of the hallowed nature of the ground on which they tread. The guided tours furnish a beaten path and a pat spiel, and touch but a small surface of what the French Quarter offers. Well over two centuries cannot be concentrated into an hour or two of hurried patter and hectic tramping. But if this is all the time that is available to a person going through New Orleans between connections it is certainly worthwhile, and it may excite sufficient interest for a more leisurely and rewarding return later.

So often, after having heard so much about the French Quarter, people come to New Orleans expecting something entirely different, and are disappointed. They find closed and locked gates, rusted iron, unpainted, weather-beaten buildings, and in many places decay, dirt, and apparent abandonment. Fortunate is the person who does not come to Frenchtown too early in his life. The young, in their impetuosity and superficiality, are apt to take a look, make a quick appraisal, and dismiss the whole thing with a shrug of the shoulders as being not worthy of their attention. Only with maturity can one see the beauty beneath the surface, for Frenchtown is tired and a little weary and unable any longer to exert itself for those who

have not the capacity to understand and appreciate. But, like a woman who has lived long and seen and suffered much, who no longer cares to possess but yet yearns to please, who was once beautiful and would still like to be approved, she will yet reveal and give herself to the patient and resourceful wooer. But the advances must be made by the seeker and the extent to which he may partake depends upon the interest and effort he is willing to expend.

Let's visit Frenchtown!

14

RUE ROYALE

In New Orleans one rarely uses the terms east, west, north or south to indicate direction. A look at the map will show why.

Frenchtown was originally laid out with no consideration for the compass. The site selected was a crescent bend in the Mississippi, and the longitudinal streets followed the general direction of the river there. The long streets just happened to run northeast and southwest and the shorter streets that crossed them at right angles naturally ran northwest and southeast. These directions are rather awkward, so the custom sprung up of referring to direction in relation to the river as "upriver" or "downriver," which soon became "uptown" and "downtown." Lateral directions became "riverside" for the direction toward the river, and "woodside" for the direction toward the swamps, which were thick with cypress trees. As the city expanded, the streets followed the curves of the river or radiated outward from the end of Canal Street. Direction therefore was never very precise or easy to state in New Orleans, so the terms uptown, downtown, riverside, and woodside are still used.

Perhaps the best place to begin a stroll through the French Quarter is from the downtown corner of Canal and Royal Streets. The only right way to see Frenchtown is on foot, walking leisurely, pausing at the various points of interest as long as desirable, and taking side-excursions into courtyards and

Rear of the St. Louis Cathedral from Orleans Street the widest street in French-town, 65 feet wide. On the left is the famous Orleans Ballroom the scene of the Quadroon Balls. In the rear of the Cathedral is St. Anthony's Garden, the celebrated duelling ground of the Creoles.

carriageways as your fancy dictates. The French Quarter cannot be done in a day—it can only be sampled. If you have several days you are fortunate. A week is none too long. The following suggested tour will take about two days to cover leisurely. Three would be better. If you do not have that long, the ground can be covered in one day if you hurry and do not take too much time to eat and do not stop. But you will not absorb much and it will not be fair either to you or to Frenchtown. So cover what you can in the time you have available and come back another time. There will always be plenty left.

Let's go!

Here at the intersection of CANAL AND ROYAL STREETS there stood until the beginning of the century a monument to Henry Clay, marking the official center of the city and the point from which distances are computed. In 1901 the statue was moved to Lafayette Square, near the City Hall, when traffic became so heavy that the monument was in the way. Around the Clay Statue, which was the public meeting-place of the city for years, were held many historic gatherings, among them the massing of the Vigilantes under Duncan in 1858 before their seizure of the Cabildo, and the meeting of the Crescent White League in 1874 before their epic and bloody battle. On this spot W. S. Parkinson rallied around him the Vigilantes, who marched through Frenchtown to the old Parish Prison and lynched the Mafia murderers of Police Chief Hennessey. Here at Royal Street was the gate through which Lafrénière, leader of the first revolution in America, marched against the shaky Spanish authority in 1768. Royal and Canal is a splendid vantage-point to view the Mardi Gras parades during the Carnival season. It is the natural gateway into the French Quarter.

Royal Street, still referred to as Rue Royale, was the main street of old New Orleans and is still one of the most unusual and interesting thoroughfares in America. Like all of the other original streets of the Old City, with the exception of Orleans Street, Rue Royale is only thirty-eight feet wide. In addition to beautiful architecture, old residences, and romantic spots, Royal Street has some of the finest antique galleries in the South. It is also the street of the artist, fortune-teller, art, lace,

perfume, and curio shop. There one finds the dealer in fine prints, rare books, silver, and leather, and every kind of unusual commodity and service. The sensitive nose will detect, long before one reaches it, a store factory where cedar chests and novelties are made before your eyes.

On the right side, at number 116 Royal Street, the word Sazerac is implanted in tile in the center of the banquette. This marks the location of the old SAZERAC COFFEE HOUSE, where the Sazerac cocktail, the most famous of New Orleans drinks, came into being about a hundred years ago.

About the middle of the last century John B. Schiller opened a coffee house, as drinking-places were called in those days, at this location. Schiller imported exclusively a superior type of brandy from a firm by the name of Messrs. Sazerac and Sons, of Limoges, France. The specialty of Schiller's bar was a brandy cocktail that he called a "Sazerac," taken from the name of the supplier of the chief ingredient. The Sazerac Cocktail, similar to the Old Fashioned of today, became very popular and still remains one of New Orleans' finest liquid attractions.

The name Sazerac is copyrighted and has been carried down through the years. The present location of the Sazerac bar is in modern New Orleans, only a few squares from Royal Street, but every mixologist in Frenchtown can prepare a Sazerac fit for a king. And you should try at least one even though you may be a normal abstainer at other times. Otherwise a visit to New Orleans just would not be complete.

On the other side of the street is the St. Regis Restaurant, formerly the OLD COSMOPOLITAN HOTEL at 121 Royal Street, a popular meeting-place in the gay nineties for the socially elite of the city. In the building on this site Dr. Francisco Antommarchi, physician to Napoleon, had his home and office. It was he who pressed the soft modelling-wax upon the features of Napoleon shortly after the death of the "Little Corporal." Later cast into bronze, the mask preserved for all time and posterity the features of the Corsican General. First placed on display in Dr. Antommarchi's office, it was later given by him to the Louisiana Historical Society, where it now has a place of honor in the museum of the Cabildo.

A few steps beyond, at 127 Royal Street, is the OLD GEM, which over the years has had a varied and colorful career as saloon, restaurant, and plotting-place. Erected as a saloon of the concert variety in 1851, it became a meeting-place for all types of people. Here in 1857 a group of New Orleans business leaders gathered upstairs and formed the Mystick Krewe of Comus, a Carnival organization, suggested by John Milton's poem. Despite tremendous competition as other Carnival clubs grew up, the Mystick Krewe of Comus has maintained its position as the foremost Carnival organization in New Orleans.

In January 1872, during Reconstruction times, when carpetbaggers had control of the State, an opposition Capitol and Legislature was set up in the rooms over the saloon. The carpetbag Governor, H. C. Warmouth, ordered the troops to break up the meetings, and a riot followed outside in the street in which one of the legislators was killed.

Later the Gem was turned into a restaurant. It was the first in the city so serve midday lunches. Previously all businesshouses had closed down for a two hour siesta in the middle of the day to permit the clerks and proprietors to go home to lunch. An old Spanish custom, and one which many New Orleaners would like to re-establish.

Directly across the street stands a marble-faced building known as the OLD MERCHANTS EXCHANGE, 126 Royal Street, which was a clearing-house for commerce and trade during the early boom days of New Orleans. In 1842 the lower floor was occupied as a United States Post Office, and later the exchange room on the second floor became the United States District Court. In this court the famous filibusterer William Walker was tried for his activities in Nicaragua, where he led an expedition to overthrow the government and set himself up as dictator. After the Civil War the Old Exchange was converted into an elaborate gambling-palace where any type of gambling from Keno to roulette could be indulged in and for any amount. As "Number 18 Royal Street" (before the adoption of the centennial system of house-numbering) it became famous throughout the country.

Turning left on Iberville Street (formerly Customhouse), the name of which honors the brother of Bienville, you pass at 725

on the right the fine LA LOUISIANE RESTAURANT. Here, in a former Creole society center, you can wine and dine sumptuously yet reasonably. Beautiful cut-glass chandeliers will be shown upon request.

Proceeding to the corner, you reach Bourbon Street, named after the royal Bourbon family, which was in power in France during the early days of New Orleans. Once one of the finest residential streets of the city, where leading Creoles had their mansions, Bourbon Street has now become the night-life strip of New Orleans. Bourbon Street has perhaps the rowdiest, loudest, heaviest-drinking, least inhibited, half-dozen blocks in the world today. Although most of the gin-mills and many of the girlie shows remain open twenty-four hours a day, the street really comes to life when darkness falls. It then assumes the appearance of an oldtime movie set rather than an actual street. Lights come on in a variety of neon colors and the twang of mountaineer chant, fortified with a guitar accompaniment, competes with the drawling whine of a moaning blues above a tinny piano background. In front of each emporium, a sporty barker extols the capabilities and perfections of the performance inside as he yells to you, ''The show is just going on!'' The show is always ''just going on.'' On every corner, if you are a loose male and particularly if you look lonesome, cab-drivers accost you in an out-of-the-side-of-the-mouth tone, and offer to provide all manner of torrid attractions. Bourbon Street caters to those who are pleasure-bound and it can accomodate from its dazzling variety any type of appetite. It is the street of the honky-tonk, the tattoo parlor, and the tourist photo shop.

Turning to the right on Bourbon Street, across the street at 209 is GALATOIRE'S, one of the oldest and better restaurants of Frenchtown. This is a Continental-type French eating-place, where the food is good, unusual, and inexpensive. Despite the crowds that line up outside Galatoire's, the proprietors have resisted modern methods and expansion. They fear that if they try to serve too many or if they get too big the standards will suffer. No reservations are taken at Galatoire's; everyone is treated exactly alike. Keep this place in mind for a future visit when hungry.

Fraser' Alley after a shower. Another popular subject for photographers and artists, it was said to have been lined with shops operated by Lafitte's freedmen pirates to dispose of their ill-gotten booty.

Front of the Major Mansion

At the corner, on the same side of the street, is another French restaurant where you can also get a good, quiet, and inexpensive dinner. The waiters of the VIEUX CARRE RESTAURANT speak French, and many of the regular patrons are old residents of Frenchtown who gather here in the Old World atmosphere that the place provides. The portions are generous, the table-cloths are clean, and the service is adequate. Skip the *à la carte* and try one of the regular dinners. Mark this one also to come back to.

At the corner of Bienville, at 238 Bourbon, stands the OLD ABSINTHE HOUSE, a square, plaster-covered, brick building which is one of the most famous landmarks in the South. According to ancient legend, now kept alive because of its commercial value, it was in a secret room in this building that General Andrew Jackson and Jean Lafitte, the pirate, planned their strategy for the Battle of New Orleans. It might be so, for there is a small windowless room, between the second and third stories, where secrecy and privacy could have been had. The building is variously claimed to have been built in 1752, 1774, 1786 and 1796, but it most probably was erected in 1806 by Pedro Font and his partner Francisco Juncadella, as a residence and business-house to market fine foods and wines imported from Spain. About fifty years later, when absinthe-drinking became popular, descendants of the builders turned it into a coffee-house and high-class bar, where the Absinthe Frappé was introduced to the public. It remains to this day the specialty of the house.

The earliest known use of absinthe was during the Franco-Algerian War, when it was prescribed as a medicine to the French soldiers. They mixed it into a drink and brought it home with them. Absinthe-drinking became popular in Paris after the middle of the nineteenth century, and it was natural that the custom would find its way outside. New Orleans, quick to accept the vices of its cousins, took it up at once, and the elite of the city soon could be seen "dripping" their absinthes, after the manner of the gay capital of France.

To introduce absinthe-drinking to New Orleans, the proprietors of this building brought over from the old country a skilled drink-mixer, who immediately installed special bar-

fountains imported from Paris to "drip" the absinthe drinks, a process which provided a superior libation. The fountains were made of exquisite Belgian black gold marble, about eight inches square at the base and about two feet high, tapering toward the top. Perched on top of each was a foot-high Grecian figure to add to the artistic effect. Midway from the top, elongated brass faucets protruded from each of the four sides. These faucets were connected to a reservoir of rainwater on the roof. Rainwater, stored in large barrel-type wooden cisterns on the roofs or on high platforms, provided an important source of water in those days. The fountains themselves were set on a square base of soft Italian white marble, about three feet square and an inch and a half thick. These were the first bar-fountains seen in the New World.

Part of the secret of a good Absinthe Frappé is in the method of mixing the ingredients. It was done in the old days by putting a little sugar into a special glass that had a hole in the bottom. Water would then drip, drop by drop, from the faucets onto the sugar and then into a glass underneath, which contained cracked ice and absinthe. The water turned the absinthe from an emerald-green to a cloudy grayish color. When the proper amount of water had dripped into the liquor and the sugar was dissolved, the drink was stirred and then poured into another glass which was being frappéd while the drink was being prepared. Then it was ready to be sipped and enjoyed.

To this day, despite many attractive offers to purchase it, the Old Absinthe House is still owned by the family of one of the original builders. The property is handled by an agent and the rentals are forwarded to Spain, where the present owners live. The place has been in continuous operation since it was built, except for a time during Prohibition, when it was padlocked by revenue agents. Its contents were then put up for auction, and the black walnut bar and fountains were sold. With better days the Old Absinthe House reopened its doors, but without the prized bar and fountains. These reappeared a block farther downtown on Bourbon Street, in a place that advertises itself as the "Old Absinthe House Bar." Both places specialize in absinthe drinks.

Absinthe was originally made by crushing the leaves and

flowering tops of such herbs as angelica root, sweet flagroot, star anise, and wormwood, and soaking these in alcohol for about eight days. This mixture was then distilled and absinthe was the result. Wormwood, or *Artemisia absinthium,* grows freely in Europe and it was brought to this country years ago. Here it is known as mugwort. Liquors made from wormwood derange the digestive system, induce horrible dreams, and may produce paralysis or even idiocy. Because of its harmful effects, the use of wormwood in liquors has been prohibited in the United States and in most other countries. Besides this the use of the word absinthe on bottles, even though they do not contain wormwood, is also forbidden in the United States. Therefore it is no longer possible to buy absinthe, either with or without wormwood, or an absinthe substitute or anything known as artificial absinthe.

Despite this, absinthe is still manufactured and is available today. Made of various roots, herbs, seeds, leaves, and barks, they are safe and delightful liquors. They are sold under trade names, and you buy them because you like them and not because they are absinthe. So, except for the wormwood, the Old Absinthe House will serve you the same Absinthe Frappé exactly as it was introduced about a century ago—or as near as modern-day mass-drinking permits. Along with the Sazerac Cocktail, the Absinthe Frappé was the favorite drink of Creole gentlemen young and old, and it is as popular in New Orleans society today as it has been for over a hundred years.

Diagonally across the street from the Absinthe House is one of the finest restaurants not only in Frenchtown or New Orleans but anywhere. To cross the portal at ARNAUD'S, 813 Bienville Street, is to put oneself in the lap of the gustatory god. Other places may have been in existence longer but none is superior. There are many who believe that Arnaud's is the finest restaurant outside of Paris.

Specialties at Arnaud's are:

Shrimp Arnaud (boiled freshly-caught shrimp, garnished with a tangy sauce that has been much imitated but never duplicated).

Truite Vendôme (broiled trout embellished with a tasty sauce of chopped shrimp, mushrooms, and red wine).

Crêpes Suzettes (thin-as-wafer pancakes cooked before your eyes in brandy).

Café Brûlot (a New Orleans Creole specialty: flaming brandy, mysteriously spiced, into which is poured hot black coffee).

And don't forget the fine wines which the highly-trained waiter will suggest. Service is either *à la carte* or *table d'hôte*, as desired, and the prices, thank goodness—and Count Arnaud Casenave, the proprietor—are fair and reasonable.

Turning to the right toward the river on Bienville Street and crossing Royal for half a square, at the intersection of EXCHANGE ALLEY AND BIENVILLE STREET, is the spot of the brutal Mafia retribution-murder of Anthony Abruzzi by Salvatore Arditto. Abruzzi was the leader of the Mafia until deposed by the Sicilian outlaw Esposito. In anger Abruzzi reported Esposito's presence to the police. Esposito was captured, and the Society decreed that Abruzzi must die for being an informer. Exchange Alley, or Passage de la Bourse, is where the noted fencing masters lived and operated their duelling academies over a hundred years ago.

Returning to Royal Street, near the end of the third square on the left side at number 333, is the FIRST UNITED STATES POST OFFICE, established immediately after the Louisiana Purchase. Long before the Pony Express of the West became famous, important mail was rushed into New Orleans on horseback over the renowned and hazardous Natchez Trace. Routine mail came by sailing-ship from Mobile through the Mississippi Sound into the Lakes, and then up the Bayou St. John to the city. The old Post Office is now Harmanson's Book Store, where water-colors, etchings, and oils of the finest local artists can be obtained, as well as rare books, colorful prints, ancient maps, and old documents.

On the uptown woodside corner of Royal and Conti Streets, number 339 is the OLD GAS BANK BUILDING. Erected in 1800 by a Spanish nobleman, it became the Planter's Bank in 1811 and, in 1820, a branch of the United States Bank of Phil-

The building at the corner of Royal and St. Ann Streets where on the evening of each year a tireless ghostly waiter, the roof waiting plaintively

Artists and art students hopefully displaying their wares in Pirates' Alley after the manner of the Greenwich Village artists in Washington Square, New York.

The Maspero and DeJean Houses in the 800 Block of "Rue Royale." Note the *garde de frise* and the wrought iron monogram in the balcony railing.

adelphia. Sixteen years later the building was sold to the New Orleans Gas Light and Banking Company, and from that time on it was known as the "Banque du Gaz" to the French-speaking residents of the Quarter and the "Gas Bank" to the Americans. The balcony railings are among the finest examples of wrought iron in Frenchtown.

On the river side is the old BANK OF LOUISIANA, at 344 Royal Street, built in 1826. After the Civil War the bank was forced to close and in 1871 the building became the Royal Street Auction Exchange. Later it was the Mortgage and Exchange Office. After the first World War it was renovated and became the local American Legion Home.

This building is one of the landmarks of the French Quarter and one of the finest from an architectural standpoint. It follows in general the classical lines of Grecian stateliness, having six majestic Ionic pillars along the facade. The lot is enclosed by an imposing iron fence, and the beautiful massive gates in front are duplicates of a pair at the entrance to the garden of the Marquis of Lansdowne, in Berkeley Square, London.

Occupying the entire square on the right across Conti Street is the NEW ORLEANS COURT BUILDING, 400 Royal Street. Many buildings dating back to the Spanish regime, including the headquarters General Jackson used while in New Orleans, were torn down to make room for this edifice. Erected in 1908 at a cost of $1,100,000, it makes a striking contrast to the venerable old buildings of Frenchtown. In other parts of the city it would be quite appropriate, but here in its stark modernity it looms as a discordant intruder amidst the fading antiquity all around it. It houses the State Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, Civil District Court of the Parish of New Orleans, State Library, Attorney General's Office, and various State departments.

Continuing down Royal past the Court you must use the eye of imagination to see the beautiful and historic ST. LOUIS HOTEL, which occupied the vacant lot from Royal to Chartres, on the downtown side of St. Louis Street. One of the most famous hostelries in the United States, it was built in 1835 at a cost of $1,500,000. Gutted by fire in 1841, it was rebuilt and remodeled on a scale of greater magnificence to become the

social and political center of the South. In the early part of 1874 the Louisiana Legislature purchased the building, and the hotel became the State Capitol. In September of that year, after a bloody battle in which hundreds were killed and wounded, citizens who were backed by the Crescent White League drove the carpetbag Governor and his Legislature out of the city. He was later reinstated by United States troops. When the Legislature convened a year later Royal, St. Louis, and Chartres Streets were lined with cannon and soldiers to prevent any outbreaks. Despite these precautions, riots did ensue inside the Capitol, but they were immediately quelled by the soldiers. Again, in 1877, a government set up in opposition to the carpetbaggers seized everything in the State, but it was unable to get control of the Capitol, which was again protected by Federal troops. For over two months nine hundred men were like prisoners in the hotel, while the United States soldiers maintained an arsenal there and made ramparts of the surrounding streets. When the Legislature was moved to Baton Rouge in 1882 the building was renovated and renamed the "Hotel Royal," but it was not profitable and had to be abandoned. After extensive hurricane damage in 1914 it was torn down.

Perhaps not an event of world-shaking importance, but one that has given considerable pleasure to untold millions, was the development of the American cocktail. Credit for this accomplishment goes to one Antoine Amedée Peychaud, a refugee from Santo Domingo who came to New Orleans in 1795 and opened an apothecary shop at 437 ROYAL STREET. He had brought with him a secret formula for a medicinal concoction called "bitters," and he added this to the brandy that he served his friends. The combination was so well received that Peychaud's became a popular drinking-place. The container that he used in serving his special drink was the French double-ended egg-cup, called a "coquetier." It was not long before people started asking for this delightful libation by the name of the vessel in which it was served. As time went on and the *coquetier* (pronounced "kó ka-tay") increased in popularity, its pronunciation began to change. Visitors to the city tried the new drink and liked it, but strangers to the French tongue had difficulty with the pronunciation. Soon the sound

of the word became modified to "cocktail," and as such its fame was spread to the rest of the world by those who found it so palatable. So it says here.

One of the most interesting buildings in the French Quarter is the PATIO ROYAL, at 417 Royal Street. Built in 1801 as a combination residence and business-house by Don José Faurie, a Spanish Grandee, it was sold four years later to the newly formed Banque de la Louisiane, or Bank of Louisiana, the first bank in New Orleans and in the entire Mississippi Valley. It is said that this is the bank that issued the "Dix" notes from which came the name "Dixieland." The wrought iron plaques bearing the monogram "L B," set into the center and in both ends of the balcony railing and the railing supports, are interesting examples of century-and-a-half-old ironwork.

In 1819 the building was sold to the socially and politically prominent Martin Gordon, after which it became a center for Creole society. When Andrew Jackson revisited New Orleans in 1832 he was a guest at the Gordon home, and after Jackson had been elected President he appointed Gordon as Collector of the Port of New Orleans, a rich prize in those days. Later Gordon suffered financial difficulties and the property was purchased by Judge Alonzo Morphy, a former attorney general and a prominent jurist. It was in the beautiful courtyard in the rear that Paul, Judge Morphy's son, watched his father's guests play chess and developed such as degree of skill that he later defeated the leading players of Europe and America to become the world champion. New Orleans is extremely proud of Paul Morphy and was greatly saddened by his premature death at 47 in 1884. The property is now owned by Tulane University and leased to a French restaurant bearing the name of Patio Royal. Entrance to the lovely courtyard is via the porte-cochere, through which proud horses pranced in ages bygone. Dinners are served in the patio and also inside, where in years past Creole belles and their beaux danced and made love. This is a splendid example of an old aristocratic Creole residence and was the locale for at least two recent movies.

The building has a subterranean passage, where the gold of Frenchtown was hidden during the Battle of New Orleans to keep it out of British hands in case of the city's defeat. This

passage guarded by a sturdy iron-bound door will be shown to visitors upon request.

Approaching the middle of this block, one suddenly becomes conscious of a delightful scent in the air. As might be expected in a city as French as New Orleans, perfumes are highly prized, and the manufacture and sale of perfumes is still quite an industry in the city. At 415 Royal Street, in a part of the Patio Royal Building, is the little perfume shop of RENE, and the scent in the air is the choice selection of Monsieur René himself, cannily sprayed on his store-front each morning to attract customers. Here the tourist and the native can buy rare scents at a fraction of what they would cost in the expensive stores and salons. Favorites in New Orleans are jasmine, sweet olive, and magnolia (the State flower). Upon request, Monsieur René will make a recommendation or even mix up an individual personal perfume.

Next door, with the monogram "D R" in the wrought iron railing, is the ROUQUETTE MANSION, 413 Royal Street. Stepping inside the foyer, which is usually open, one can see lovely brocade, and other relics of earlier royal splendor. A few steps farther leads to a small courtyard, where the slave quarters can be seen.

Dominique Rouquette, a wealthy importer of wines, bought this home in 1809, two years after it was built. One of his sons who was born here, Adrien Rouquette, fell in love with the daughter of an Indian chief of the Choctaw nation. Adrien took an Indian name "Chata-Ima" (Choctaw-like), and went to live with the tribe so that he could be near his sweetheart Oushala (Bird Singer). But Oushala died, and in great grief Adrien entered the priesthood. He devoted the rest of his life to writing poetry and ministering to his adopted Indian people.

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THE FRENCH OPERA, ETC.

At 409 Royal Street, next to the corner, is the town-house of a once-prominent New Orleans lawyer, merchant, banker, and "higher up" smuggler. It was to this building, JEAN BLANQUE'S HOME, and its owner that Jean Lafitte sent the British papers with which the English had attempted to enlist the support of the Baratarians and their leader in 1815. Blanque acted as intermediary between Lafitte and the American officials, Governor Claiborne and General Jackson, in the same way he had previously acted as agent or glorified "fence" for the "black ivory" and other illegal trades that were so heavy in those days. An associate of Blanque's in both legitimate and sub rosa operations was the adventurer-merchant Daniel Clark, of whom we will hear more later.

Jean Blanque died in 1816, and in 1825 his widow Delphine married Doctor Leonard LaLaurie, who had come from France to establish a practice in New Orleans. Madame LaLaurie was later convicted of cruelty to her slaves, and as mistress of the "Haunted House" at 1140 Royal Street she became the principal figure in bizarre and sensational happenings that remain still the spiciest scandal of the French Quarter. We'll tell about that later also.

Coming to Conti and Royal Streets, the last building in the square on the right is the LOUISIANA STATE BANK, 401 Royal Street. This corner was formerly the financial center of New Orleans and the Mississippi Valley, important banks having

occupied three of its four corners. The building also has a fine wrought iron balcony with a monogram of the letters "LSB." The structure was built by Benjamin Latrobe, the famous architect, who was largely responsible for the restoration of the Capitol in Washington after it had been burned by the British in the War of 1812. The building is now Manheim's, a leading antique salon.

Turning right, and proceeding along Conti Street in what is a northwestward direction, everything on the right for several squares (including the 400 block of Royal Street) was in the area of total destruction of the 1788 fire and must therefore date from that time. At the corner of Bourbon Street and Conti is a night club called the OLD ABSINTHE HOUSE BAR. It is here that the beautiful bar and the priceless marble fountains from the Old Absinthe House a block up the street can be seen. No longer in use, for their utility has long since passed, they are interesting symbols of a past epoch. Here can be seen deep pits in the marble bases, caused by the dripping of water from the faucets for nearly a century.

Turning to the right on Bourbon, and up one block to St. Louis and then to the left, the GRIMA HOUSE stands about midway of the square on the left side, at 820 St. Louis Street. Looking at this beautiful building, no-one would guess that it is well into its second century of existence. It is a thing of beauty and a joy forever for lovers of the finer things to behold. Exhibiting a skillful blending of Georgian architecture with the Creole plan of construction, it is an outstanding example of an aristocratic residence of the most prosperous days of New Orleans. It was one of the most completely appointed homes in the ancient regime of the French Quarter, having every convenience known to the times.

Built in 1823 by Samuel Herman, a wealthy commission-merchant, it was sold twenty years later to Felix Grima, whose name it still bears. It has one of the most beautiful courtyards in the old square, separate slave quarters, stables, *garconnière,* and coach-house, all within spacious grounds behind a stern but dignified facade. From its attractive doorway entrance through its large rooms with their painted woodwork, high ceilings, and curving staircases, it is a beautiful example

of early Creole elegance. A memento of the Civil War remains in the bullet hole in the polished brass newel-post, said to have been fired by General Butler's men when they were searching Confederate homes. A striking and novel construction feature worthy of attention is the double transoms, in which a candle could be placed and thereby shed light in two rooms at the same time. It is now the Christian Women's Exchange and is open to the public.

At the corner of ST. LOUIS AND DAUPHINE STREETS the twilight zone of the former red-light section is reached. No sharp boundaries existed, but the more sedate and expensive palaces were on the edges, and the concentration of the poorer and more commercial houses was off to the left, up Dauphine and Burgundy Streets toward Canal.

Across Dauphine Street, at 505, is the RESIDENCE OF JOHN JAMES AUDUBON, who facing starvation, worked here during 1821 and 1822 on the "Birds of America" paintings that were to make him wealthy and immortal. A first edition of this beautiful and colossal publication is on exhibition in the Museum of Natural History, in the Presbytère at Jackson Square.

Continuing in a downtown direction one block, and turning right towards the river for another block, a vacant lot appears on the uptown woodside corner of Bourbon and Toulouse Streets. This is the site of the famous FRENCH OPERA HOUSE.

Opera in New Orleans had its beginning when George Washington was President of the United States, and the city has the distinction of being the first in North America to support an opera company. The earliest recorded instances of opera in New Orleans were the light operatic sketches given by Louis Tabary and his band of Santo Domingo exiles in Le Spectacle de la St. Pierre, described as a "long, low wooden structure built of cypress." By 1810 the "Spectacle" had failed, but two other theatres, the Theatre of St. Philip and the Théatre d'Orleans, carried on. A horrible accident occurred to the latter in 1854, when the balcony collapsed and crashed during a performance killing a number of people. This put a damper on opera for a time but the appreciation of the Creoles for this type of entertainment made it certain that such setbacks would be only temporary. In 1859 a stock company was formed which

engaged James Gallier, noted architect, to draw up plans for a new opera house. Permission was obtained from the city authorities for the builder to keep huge bonfires burning in the streets so that work could progress night and day without interruptions. With a seating capacity of 2,079, the new French Opera opened on December 1, 1859, with a presentation of *William Tell*.

The French Opera became the center of social life for New Orleans and the entire South. World-famous artists sought the privilege of appearing here, and several established themselves in the city, chief among them being the primadonna Adelina Patti, who lived on Royal Street. Tuesdays and especially Saturdays were the fashionable society evenings. Everyone who was anybody, or pretended to be anybody, made regular appearances at the French Opera. Full dress with white kid gloves was required of the men, and for the lovely Creole women it was an opportunity to display their physical charms to best advantage with imported low-cut gowns, gorgeous jewels, and the lushness of local camellias and gardenias. For years the French Opera House was the scene of the spectacular Carnival balls, then given in far greater length and scope than today. What started the fire that destroyed this grand institution on December 2, 1919, was never determined. That sorrow-laden night, when the Old French Opera burned, strong men stood right here on the corner and cried unashamedly. They seemed to sense what it meant. The fire was symbolic; it was the end of an era. With destruction of the Opera House a part of New Orleans died. Not even the charred and twisted shell remains today—nothing except a blank, glaring, vacant lot. What was once the center of culture of a great city is now the scene of another kind of night life. Where beautiful women once disported themselves in luxurious overdress, surrounding drinking-establishments and strip-shows make much of the fact that inside can be seen attractive females in just the opposite condition. So, great pleasure and satisfaction is still being given on Bourbon Street; the only difference is that it is now another kind of seeker.

Few of the spectators of the New Orleans Opera realized that behind the gay performances there was hidden a tragedy

that paralleled and rivalled that of Quasimodo in Victor Hugo's *Hunchback of Notre Dame*. The richest tenor voice in the New Orleans Opera chorus belonged to a short, awkward, ungainly dwarf named Antonio Rapetto. Had he been gracefully formed he might have been world-famous, for there was none who had the tone, the timbre, the range, and the volume that came from the misshapen body of the little Italian. Music was his life—a part of his soul—but he presented such a ludricous figure that the producers were forced to bury him in the chorus background and behind ample costume to prevent his being laughed at. To Rapetto it was a half-a-loaf life; but he accepted his fate stoically and philosophically, asking only that he be permitted to sing in his beloved opera.

For nearly forty years Rapetto gave his best, adding to the luster and quality of the Opera in New Orleans, and he was largely responsible for its success. For this pathetic figure there were no gay forays to the brightly-lighted night spots for a drink and a bite after the performance. He knew that his dwarfed, ungainly figure, coupled with a nose that would do credit to a Bergerac, would not only repel strangers but also embarass his friends. So with grease-paint removed to bare his awesome ugliness, Rapetto would slowly and disconsolately plod across the street to his solitary, dimly-lighted room, alone and forgotten.

But Rapetto had companionship of another sort. He created in clay figures of people he respected and admired—such as Garibaldi, the Pope, famous Italian musical people. Rapetto was neither a good sculptor nor a poor one. There were touches of genius in his statues, but in general his works were not those of a real artist. They were lacking somewhere, but they were satisfactory to him. They were his creations. They were his companions—his friends.

One night in 1899 a doctor was called to the dismal little front room in Toulouse Street across from the French Opera. There he lay dying, surrounded by his plaster figures but otherwise all alone. Nothing the doctor did could save him, and the pathetic creature died and was quietly buried. Only the critics and those who had worked with him realized that a great artist had passed away. Adelina Patti once said that Rapetto had

the finest male voice she had ever heard. His death was a blow to the entire company.

Occasionally today one of Rapetto's statues will turn up in a second-hand shop on Royal Street. Except for the very few who know the story behind them and buy them for sentimental reasons, prospective purchasers rarely buy. Not good, not bad; they were the reflection of their creator—the man to whom God gave a great gift but at the same time a curse that prevented him from using it to the fullest. But for this peculiar quirk of circumstances the name Antonio Rapetto might have come down through musical history with those of Patti, Caruso, and Pinza.

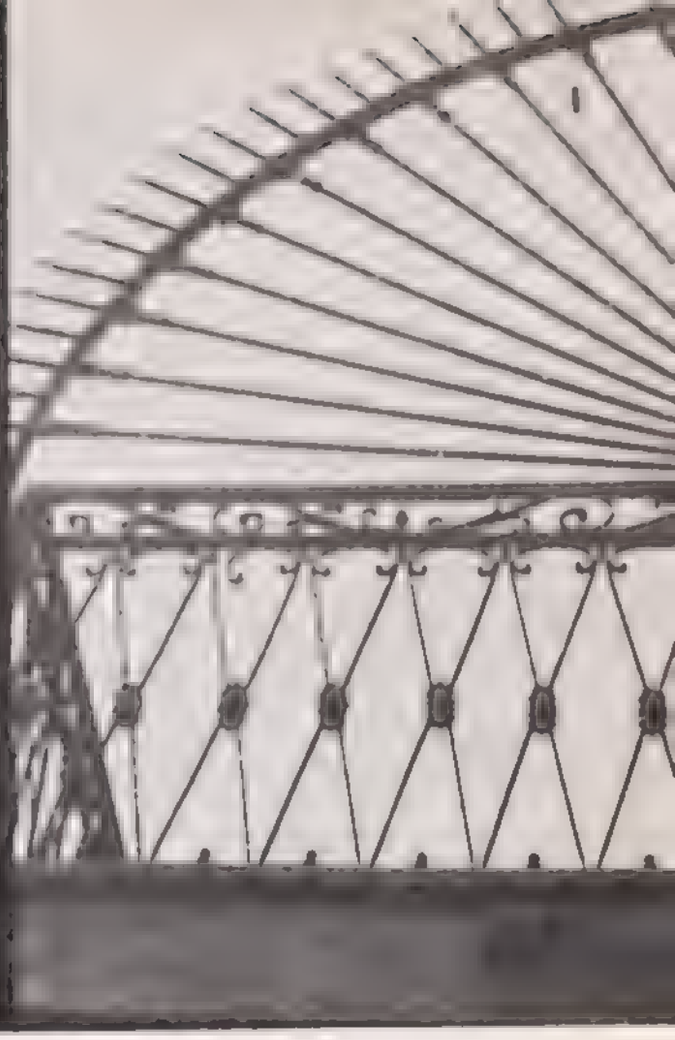
In passing, take notice of the cast iron railing on the house at 532 BOURBON STREET. A lyre design with intricate scrolls and sunbursts, it is a very ornate yet beautiful example of the cast iron work, which appeared at a slightly later period than wrought iron.

Of particular interest to writers and those interested in literature is the building at 516 BOURBON STREET, where Lafcadio Hearn lived in a small rented room in 1878. Hearn was a low-paid reporter on the New Orleans *Item* who fell in love with the city, saying that there was so much beauty around him that he didn't "care a damn whether I made money or not." Hearn, who later married a Japanese, fell in love with a quadroon. Of this affair he wrote, "I have suffered the tortures of a thousand souls. . . . I became passionately in love before I knew it. . . it required all the reason and all the strength I could summon to save myself. You have no idea of the strange fascination possessed by these serpent women. . . another kiss, even another look, would plunge me into a depth of ruin which no earthly power could save me from. And the temptation is always before me. You could not understand unless you lived in this accursed city. Still I love it so much. I love New Orleans!" So spoke a great writer and great artist of a great city.

Now off again in the direction of uptown, back to St. Louis Street. A left turn toward the river, a short walk, and—Voila! ANTOINE'S.

It seems almost as if this shrine should be approached with

Antique lamp at Madame John's Legacy.



Close-up of the *garde de frise* on the b
cony of the LaLand Casa.

Old Spanish cottage built in 1790 by a junior officer in the Spanish Army.

salaams and bated breath, such is its famous and well-deserved reputation. To say all that should be said about Antoine's in a small space would be quite a feat—nay, impossible.

Now in its second century of catering to the palates of the discerning, Antoine's was founded in 1840 by Antoine Alciatore, grandfather of the present proprietor, Roy Alciatore. The roster of guests reads like a "Who's Who" of the world, including seven Presidents of the United States, several crowned heads of Europe, and royalty by the yard. Top names in literature, sports, movies and stage, music, aviation and every other line of endeavor grace the pages of the Antoine guest book. To have been in New Orleans and not visited Antoine's is not to have seen New Orleans.

Those who have never been in Antoine's invariably visualize a colossal movie-set type of eating place, gorgeously decorated with all the bright colors of the rainbow, with gold, silver, and bronze leaf in every conceivable spot, with a name orchestra playing popular music or operatic selections, with sedate footmen in princely livery opening carriage doors, and décolletté hat-checkers and silk-clad cigarette-girls, all eager to wait on you and take your money.

Not so!

Antoine's is today as it was when it was founded, an immaculately clean place with tableware and linen of the solid, home-like type. Attentive, quiet waiters are there to help you. You go to Antoine's to dine. No brass band or juke-box will disturb the tranquillity of the exquisite cuisine. There is no bar; the emphasis is entirely on food. But, wines and liquors are also delectable foods. At Antoine's they are given their proper proportion. The finest wines and liquors are served, to complement the other ingredients of a dinner and not as a means of imbibition. Antoine's rare wine cellar is one of the finest and most complete in the country, with over 5,000 bottles, the oldest wine-vintage being 1884 and the rarest brandy 1811. The same menu has been used for over fifty years, day in and day out, and it is printed in French. But the waiters, who all speak many tongues, will assist you; so this should cause no concern. It's a profound responsibility to attempt to select at Antoine's but the following will give you

a rough idea of some of the leading specialties:

Huitres en coquille à la Rockefeller. (You've guessed it--the famous "Oysters Rockefeller.")

Succulent bivalves baked in their shells with oh! so secret and delicious ingredients. This is an Antoine "original," each serving of which is made to order, of course, and numbered. There have been nearly two million servings since it was invented in 1899.

Bisque d'écrivesses àla cardinal. (A soup of crayfish boiled in white wine, then pounded into a pulp and wedded with cream, aromatic herbs, and vegetables.)

Pompano en papillote. (Sweet young Pompano with a delightful sauce, cooked (yes!) in a paper bag. . . to retain all the flavor.)

Poulet Chanteclair. (Chicken marinated in red wine and cooked by a secret Antoine process--from another world.)

Pommes Soufflés. (Something new under the sun. Delectable puffed potatoes light as a zephyr.)

There is only one Antoine's! It is the ultimate in dining perfection.

Around the corner to the left on Royal Street, at 519, is a plastered-brick two-story building known as the SPANISH COMMANDANCIA. Tradition claims that here is where the Spanish mounted police were quartered during the tenure of Governor Don Estevan Miro. At each side of the driveway entrance leading into the courtyard are upended ancient cannons, probably buried as buffers to prevent carriages from striking the building. Before the fire of 1788 there was a business establishment on this site that imported and dispensed the whale-oil that was used in the street lamps for illumination during the Spanish regime.

Directly across the street, at 520 Royal, is one of the finest structures in Frenchtown, the MAISON SEIGNOURET. Because of its attractive courtyard and unusual construction features it was selected by the New Orleans Arts and Crafts Club as a school for art students, and it has been the subject of countless

front of and guarding the Battle Abbey.

home of one of George W. Cable's fictional characters.

roof.`

paintings, etchings, and photographs. It was built in 1816 by Francois Seignouret, a native of Bordeaux, who imported the French wines that were preferred by the Creoles over the Spanish vintages.

An interesting feature of this house is the half-story or mezzanine that can be observed just above the first floor, where the wine-importers stored their casks of wine. In 1870 Seignouret leased the building to Pierre Brulatour, who continued the wine-importing business, and today the building is better known as the Brulatour House. On damp days the tangy aroma of the wine that soaked the floors of the storage-room for so many years comes out to flavor the atmosphere of the courtyard.

Monsieur Seignouret combined his wine business with another enterprise for which he is better known today. In a little shop in the courtyard he manufactured high-quality furniture. His tables and bedroom suites are highly sought today by discriminating collectors. Several old Creole families point with pride to beds, *chaises longues*, and tables identified by the famous hallmark of Monsieur Seignouret. His distinctive hallmark, a large ornate scrollwork letter "S" is similar to that of the design worked into the *garde de frise* on the balcony of the building.

A *garde de frise* is a protective device placed at the end of a balcony or between adjoining galleries to keep unwelcome visitors away. This particular specimen is one of the most unusual oddities of Frenchtown. With flowing lines and an attractive pattern, it accomplishes its purpose through the clusters of needle-pointed prongs that grow out all along its border. Any marauder not discouraged by its appearance would be horribly impaled if he tried to circumvent this silent guardian. There are other unusual examples of these guardians in Frenchtown. Look for them.

Recently some workmen digging in the Seignouret courtyard suddenly saw the ground give way and disappear before them. A yawning cavern appeared. A hurried investigation revealed a dark, mysterious, brick-walled tunnel. Officials were notified and attempts were made to explore it; but it was partially filled, and progress was not possible without extensive work.

Dank and musty, it pointed in the general direction of the river. No-one knows the purpose of this long-lost and forgotten subterranean passage but one can think of little legitimate reason for such a byway in this place.

Situated only a few feet from the St. Louis Hotel, which was the scene of so much violence and bloodshed when it was the State Capitol, this tunnel could easily have been the means by which food was smuggled in to the nearly thousand carpetbaggers during the two months that they were encamped there, surrounded by soldiers. The tunnel also is only a few hundred feet from the Napoleon House on Chartres Street, and it may well have been a prop in the famous plot to bring the French Emperor to New Orleans in 1821. Or it might have been a trade avenue by which the smugglers of Jean Lafitte brought contraband merchandise into the city to appear later in Pirates' Alley. Many intriguing mysteries and dark secrets lie buried under the streets and buildings of Frenchtown which but for the mere whim of chance may be forever unrevealed.

At 529 Royal Street, across the street from the Maison Seignouret, is one of two houses in the center of New Orleans that escaped the fire of 1794. This is the CASA MERIEULT, built in 1792, and is frequently pointed out as the residence of the Spanish Governor Miro. It is possible that Miro might have occupied a building on this site, but if so it was destroyed in 1788. The present structure was erected a year after Miro returned to Spain. A notable feature is the cast iron railing that extends entirely across the front of the building. This is of such fine quality that it is hardly distinquishable from wrought iron.

In the rear of the building, around the corner at 708 Toulouse Street, is an odd structure, long attractive to tourists and visiting artists. It is known as the COURT OF THE LIONS, and gets its name from the fact that the courtyard is guarded at each side of the gate by a stone lion. With an odd sense of humor, the sculptor made one of the lions a male and the other a female, but he puckishly put a mane on each.

At least two books were written here that have left their imprint on American literature. Vincent Nolte, a German merchant, owned the property at one time and it was here that he wrote his autobiography, *Fifty Years in Both Hemispheres*.

The material from this was used by Hervey Allen in writing his lengthy historical novel, *Anthony Adverse*. Winston Churchill (not the Prime Minister) wrote *The Crossing* while living in this building. This is a novel of American pioneers which has much of its action centered in the building.

At 615 Royal Street is the popular COURT OF THE TWO SISTERS, named after Emma and Bertha Camors, who conducted a specialty store there many years ago. One of the more attractive courtyards in the Latin Quarter, it was originally an exclusive Creole home. It is now a leading restaurant and bar where one can enjoy good food, fine drinks, and soft music in a languorous romantic atmosphere.

Lining the wall of the porte-cochere, where stately carriages rolled in past ages, are historical notices and specimens of the ten flags to which Louisiana has owed allegiance since her founding. On the floor against the wall is a little ditch, built in the stones of the passageway, which drained the heavy rain from the tropical showers out of the courtyard into the open sewers alonside the banquettes of earlier days. In an earlier building on this site lived N. Perier, Governor from 1753 to 1763. Under Governors Perier and de Vaudreil the colony patterned its social life after that of the French court, and this location was the hub of gayety and regal pomp. It was perhaps the earliest social center of the South.

A few steps downtown, on the same side of Royal Street at 621, is the former home of GENERAL ZACHARY TAYLOR, Louisiana's President of the United States. This building also has one of the finest courtyards in the French Quarter. All of the houses in this region have spacious courtyards or patios.

Across the street, at 624 Royal Street, is the MAYRONNE HOUSE, where in 1794 the second fire started that destroyed nearly all of New Orleans. Fanned by a strong wind, it destroyed practically all of the buildings that had been rebuilt since the earlier disastrous fire of 1788. Two buildings were known to have escaped: the Casa Merieult, at 529 Royal Street, and the Casa Cavalier, directly across the street.

The Casa Cavalier at 631 Royal Street is also known as PATTI'S COURTYARD because Adelina Patti, the illustrious opera star, lived here while singing at the French Opera House.

The youthful Patti is credited with transforming the French Opera from a failing venture to a great success because of the excellence of her voice. This building, recently restored, escaped the fire of 1794, and there is a strong belief that it might also have been spared at least partially by the holocaust of 1788. In any event it is one of the oldest buildings in the French Quarter and has one of the most beautiful courtyards in the Old Square.

On the uptown river corner of Royal and St. Peter Streets is a building that many lovers of Frenchtown lore consider to be the most colorful in the Quarter. It is known as the FIRST SKYSCRAPER because it was the first structure in the South to be built more than two stories high. It was originally a singly story building and is said to have been erected in 1774. Two additional floors were added in 1811. While the building was progressing, according to Judge Henry C. Castellanos, hundreds of people would gather at the corner diagonally opposite and predict the failure of the undertaking. They expected to see it topple down any moment basing their conjectures upon the yielding nature of the soil. The owner and the man responsible for the daring venture was Dr. Yves Le Monnier, who rented out the ground floor to merchants and occupied the upper two stories himself. His distinctive monogram still exists in the wrought iron balcony railings and, though it had later owners and has been given other popular names the place is still spoken of reverently as the Le Monnier Mansion.

The New Orleans swamp-lands furnished a firmer foundation than the wiseacres predicted, and the faith of the good doctor was justified. The building did not topple, nor did it settle or break up, and in 1876 a later owner Bertrand Saloy added a fourth and final story. These additions can be plainly seen in the facade of the building.

George W. Cable, the eminent writer of stories about New Orleans, is responsible for another popular name for this building. After the fourth story was added the building was turned into an apartment, and rooming-house, and Cable made it the locale of one of his famous legends. According to his tale, a strange man moved into two rooms on the second story with no baggage except a hair trunk, which was an unusual kind of

traveling-case used more than a century ago, generally covered with horse or cow hide. He seemed to have no occupation, but eked out a living from various odd jobs, occasionally disappearing for long periods of time. Nobody knew his name or anything about him, and efforts to cultivate his friendship were rebuffed. Someone once referred to him as "George" and he then became known as "Monsieur George," later shortened to " 'Sieur George." He took care of his own rooms and when he was absent they were locked, so that no-one could enter. Mysterious women are woven into the story, and always in the background is the carefully-guarded, never-opened hair trunk. Kookoo, the landlord, was sure that the trunk contained a great treasure and vowed to look into it. But he never had the opportunity until, after many years of scheming, he managed to get into 'Sieur George's room. The trunk proved to be filled not with treasure but with long outdated lottery-tickets. For those who prefer the traditional to the factual—and most people do—it makes a pretty story and gives sufficient reason for this building, with "its gray stucco peeling off in broad patches," as Cable described it over fifty years ago, to be well and romantically famed as " 'Sieur George's House."

Directly across St. Peter Street is one of the most striking examples of cast iron lace to be seen in Frenchtown and one of the most photographed buildings in the city. Built in the late 1830's as a town house by Jean LaBranche, a wealthy planter, it has long been a highlight for every visitor to the Old City. The iron scrollwork design of entwined oak leaves and acorns is unsurpassed in delicacy and beauty anywhere.

Housed in the ground floor of this building is the well-known HOUSE OF THE ARTISTS, which supplies materials and encouragement both to the budding student artists of the Quarter and to those already famous. Side by side are the polished work of the master and the halting attempts of the tyro, each appropriately priced. The genial proprietor, Ray M. Thompson, author and former advertising man and editor, will be very happy to autograph his book, *Land of Lafitte the Pirate*, the most recent and acknowledged by reviewers to be one of the finest works about the Buccaneer of the Gulf.

Turning away from the river and walking out St. Peter Street,

at 710 you reach the GREEN SHUTTER SHOP. This unusual building gets its name from the color of its window-blinds, which have been green as long as anyone knows. One of the oldest structures in this area, it is known to have been built prior to 1798, and it is strongly suspected that it was built by the early French settlers and went through the two fires unharmed. The type of construction indicates this possibility, and if it be true it is one of the oldest structures in the entire Mississippi Valley.

The pink-plastered old mansion at 718 St. Peter Street is known as the CASA FLECHIER. It was the town house of a prominent planter, Etienne de Flechier, and was built in 1792. It has one of the finest courtyards in the Quarter and its charms are open to the public. The popular Pat O'Brien's Bar is located on the street at one side of the porte-cochere, and drinks are also served at tables under luxurious tropical vegetation in the patio in the rear. This is one of the pleasanter drinkeries in New Orleans and the French Quarter.

Another beautiful courtyard is located at the rear of the building at 726 St. Peter Street, known as FAISENDIEU'S TAVERN. It dates well back into the Spanish regime. In the early days of the American occupation Antoine Faisendieu operated an inn here that catered to the better-class traveler and to the patrons of the theatre next door.

Right next door at 723 St. Peter Street, is the site of New Orleans' first theatre. Known as LE SPECTACLE, it was here that Louis Tabary and his group of players settled down and established themselves after having been driven from Santo Domingo by the uprising of the blacks in 1791. The first performances of his troupe were given in tents, private homes, and rented halls until they found permanent quarters. The performances were frequently accompanied with violence, for the actors insisted upon injecting French propaganda into their portrayals. While this was received sympathetically by the French gentry, it hardly seemed proper to the Spanish officials.

Opened and closed intermittently, the theatre continued for about a quarter of a century, until the building was condemned as being unsafe for public gatherings.

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A ROYAL TRAGEDY

Continuing across Bourbon Street to Dauphine, and proceeding one square to the right to the uptown river corner of Orleans and Dauphine, you come upon a most imposing and unusual structure, which is known as the LE PRETE MANSION. The object of many photographs, its third-floor balcony provides a view that frames the St. Louis Cathedral in iron filigree, producing one of the most exotic and popular pictures from the French Quarter.

In its early days it was the town house of Jean Baptiste Le Prète, banker, social leader and rice planter, and the aloof, imposing structure was then the most pretentious in town. Le Prète furnished it lavishly and installed the latest conveniences, including what is said to have been the first bathtub in New Orleans, a massive, white-marble affair. Huge mirrors, surrounded by impressive carved frames, were scarcely surpassed in elegance by the rock-crystal chandeliers with their thousands of pendants that hung from the ceilings of the main rooms. The chandeliers themselves have long since been sold, but the intricate plaster rosettes in the ceilings from which the chandeliers hung can still be seen.

On this site, and attributed by certain raconteurs to this very building, occurred one of the strangest happenings in early French Quarter lore. It took place in 1792, according to the most popular version of the story.

This section of the Old Square was not built up, and the

house stood alone—a most imposing and awe-inspiring edifice—somber, dignified and aloof. It was the fall of the year and floors had been scrubbed, the silver polished, and the linen laundered in preparation for the family's moving in from the plantation for another winter social season. Just as the house was made ready the planter was summoned to the Cabildo by an urgent call from the Governor. Consternation reigned in the offices of the government. It seems that a very important personage was in the city and there were no suitable accommodations where he and his considerable entourage could stay. Would the planter, as a personal favor to the Governor, turn over his town house to the distinguished guest and his party? Well, the grower didn't know—his family had made their plans and it would be inconvenient. Pressure was brought to bear by the Governor and a fabulous fee was offered; there were strong political reasons, and it was extremely important. When the planter continued to hesitate, the Governor in strictest secrecy revealed the identity of the visitor. He was none other than the blood-brother of the Sultan. There had been a political upheaval, and the brother unsympathetic and jealous of the Sultan, had revolted and fled, incidentally taking with him all he could carry of the Sultan's treasures and the favorites of the potentate's harem. Baron Francisco Luis Hector de Carondelet, the Governor, became insistent—there were alliances at stake. The planter agreed to consult with his wife, and in the end he acceded to the request. The house in its entirety, with its furnishings, slaves, and fully-stocked stables, was turned over to the Governor for the use of the royal stranger.

In the dead of night a strange procession of covered conveyances moved through the city, transporting passengers and cargoes of crates and packages to the mansion at the corner of Orleans and Dauphine Streets. For the next few months every attempt was made to conceal what was going on inside the house, but bits of information leaked out to tradespeople and to the curious. To the already elegant furnishings the Moslem added the sumptuous treasures of an Eastern court. Floors were strewn with thick, lush, exotically colored carpets from Smyrna and Persia. Striped silk coverlets adorned the furniture, and exquisite velvet draperies hung in profusion. Censers of

A study in arches. Long believed to be the original stables at the French Barracks on Government Road [illegible] Street but now understood to be [illegible] later construction.

The Oakland Cemetery. One of the oldest buildings in the Mississippi Valley.

The Beauregard House where lived the Confederate General who ordered the firing of the first shot of the Civil War. Also the scene of Mardi Gras parades.

pure gold were kept lighted, permeating the air with delicate odors of choice incense. The finest of wines and the rarest of viands graced the festive board. All this formed an appropriate setting for the five gorgeous houris that the rebellious Turk had stolen from his royal brother. Young, full-blown, and bewitching, they were anointed daily with scented oils and aromatic lotions to nourish their swart lusciousness. Their sole purpose in life being the gratification of the royal one, these love-goddesses made it a duty to keep themselves exquisite, seeking nothing in return but to provide pleasure to the master. There was Ulema, Aranda, Sala, Nyfesseh, and his favorite Buthieta, daughter of a Bedouin chief, who had been taken in battle as a spoil of war.

Always a center of keen interest, the mansion now had become the object of universal curiosity throughout the city. Every excuse was invented to pass it in order to learn something of what was going on inside. Little was discovered, however, except an occasional movement of the portieres draped over the windows or a muffled strain of Oriental music sifting through the closed casements. All deliveries of food and other necessities were made at the rear door, and no-one was permitted to enter. Truly the stately mansion had become a house of mystery.

One morning, as Nueva Orleans began to wake up, the milkman knocked on the rear door. There was no answer. This continued for several days, and other tradesmen had the same experience. Tongues began to wag faster than ever. Where were Ismail and Hassan, Achmed and Amurat, the eunich attendants of the harem and servants of Cousrof Effendi, brother of the Sultan? Why was there no answer to repeated knocking and ringing of the alarm-bell at the gate of the house? Something was wrong. An appeal was finally made to the Cabildo. The Governor sent an *alcalde* and the police to investigate. They too received no response to their efforts and they decided to break their way in. Smashing down the door, they came upon a horrible scene.

At the threshold of one of the salons, his hand still gripping a priceless tapestry on the wall, lay Cousrof Effendi, his handsome head nearly severed from his body. Blood from his slashed

throat had poured out and thickened on the gorgeous Ispahan rug under his body. Buthieta, with her arms around her royal lover, lay dressed in dazzling yellow silken pantaloons, unclothed from the waist up, her firm rounded breasts pressed close to her dead master, a jeweled dagger protruding from her back. A bloodstained red-satin slipper with a curled pointed toe lay near the bodies. In an adjoining room, swathed in silks horribly stained with dried blood, lay the cruelly mutilated bodies of the four other members of the royal seraglio. Servants and members of the household were found throughout the building, where they had fought and died. The odor of death hung heavily and permeated rooms formerly kept fragrant with sandalwood, spikenard, and fir. It was a ghastly spectacle.

Investigation turned up a frightened sailor, who revealed that while returning from a drinking bout a few nights before he had heard muffled screams and the sounds of a struggle coming from the old mansion. Being out after curfew without a pass, in violation of the law, he had been afraid to report the disturbance.

The news of the slaughter spread through the town like a forest-fire until the mystery was on every tongue. But it was never satisfactorily solved. The most significant bit of information was contributed by a trapper, who told officials that he had seen a piratical-looking Turkish vessel hovering in Barataria Bay just before the assassination. All doubt seemed to be removed when workmen hired by the owner to clean up the premises found a marble tablet inscribed with Arabic characters, which when translated read,"The justice of heaven is satisfied. The Sublime Emperor of the Faithful, the Supporter of the Faith, the Omnipotent Master and Sultan of the World has redeemed his vow. God is great and Mohammed is his prophet. Allah!"

The legend continues to this day that when a certain star centers itself within the perimeter of the crescent moon, strange sounds come from the Le Prète Mansion. Those who have heard them say that sounds of girlish laughter and singing, rising above the clinking of a tambourine, are suddenly broken by heart-rending screams of agony. In front of the fire-place, when the humidity is particularly high, a vivid red stain appears

where Royal Ottoman blood was spilled long ago. Later owners have replaced the floor in an effort to eliminate this phenomenon but with no success. Also in the hall is an imprint in the floor that some people claim is merely an imperfection in the planking, but which bears an amazing likeness to a red Turkish satin shoe with a curled-up toe.

This story varies in the telling, and there are those who may doubt its authenticity, but it has been given credence by reputable historians. French Quarter guides point out the building as the "House of the Turk," although it is doubtful that the existing building was the actual scene of the tragedy. It is now the location of the New Orleans Art School, and gay young aspirants for eminence in the field of art tread the venerable halls, seemingly unaware of the frenzied wailings and signs of tragedy that are said to crop out periodically. But ask any of the old residents of Frenchtown, those who have lived long in its historic atmosphere. They will not tell you that any doubt exists. They have more respect for such things.

Yes, This is Frenchtown.

When Adrien de Pauger was drawing up his plans for Nouvelle Orléans he planned this thoroughfare, now ORLEANS STREET, as the main street of the city. Leading from the parish church to the old stockades on Rampart Street, it bisected the town. This "Grand Rue" was made forty-five feet wide, seven feet wider than other streets of the old square.

Directly across Orleans Street from the Le Prete Mansion there stood for more than a century until it was removed only a few years ago, an unusual date tree, said to have been planted by the fiery but beloved priest PERE ANTOINE.

When Antonio Ildefonso Moreno was a young man in his native Spain, he and his best friend Emilio Jardin entered a monastery in Granada to study for the priesthood. Into their little village came an attractive young woman, Anglice Hernandez, and both fell in love with her. Emilio, the handsomer of the two, won the girl and forsook the frock. Antonio continued his studies, eventually coming to New Orleans as Fray Antonio de Sedella. Banished from the colony for attempting to establish the Spanish Inquisition, he later returned and, changing his name to the French form of "Père Antoine," he

became highly respected and revered in New Orleans. When he died the lodge of Free Masons of New Orleans turned out in a body to attend his funeral. This started the rumor that the priest had been a secret member of the Masonic order.

After he had been well established in New Orleans, according to the legend, Père Antoine received a letter. It was from Anglice, who wrote that her husband had died and that she herself was on her deathbed. The letter spoke pathetically of their little daughter and implored the good priest, in remembrance of his former feelings, to take care of the little girl until she was old enough to look out for herself. Anglice's letter was finished in another hand, informing Antoine of the death of Madame Jardin. It also told him that little Anglice had been placed on a vessel, bound for Louisiana. The letter was hardly read when the little girl arrived. When Antoine saw her, he uttered a cry of surprise. Anglice was so like her mother that he fell in love with her at once.

In addition to his church work, Père Antoine now had a new interest, and he set about making a new life for the child. It was difficult at first for the girl to adjust herself to the strange city, but before long she was very happy in the little house on Orleans and Dauphine Streets where the priest lived. But this was not to continue. She came down with yellow fever, the scourge of New Orleans. The doctor was powerless, and despite his best efforts and the prayers of Père Antoine, the girl passed on. The broken-hearted priest blessed and tenderly buried the delicate body in his garden, in order that he might always have her close.

One morning in the following spring, the priest noticed a delicate stem with two curiously-shaped emerald leaves growing from the little mound in the garden. His first reaction was to pluck this interloper that had the temerity to despoil such sacred soil, but something stopped him. Straight and graceful it grew until Pere Antoine realized that it was a date palm. The good father vowed to care for the tree as he had wanted to provide for little Anglice. He prayed God in the name of Anglice for the strength to make New Orleans free from sin, asking that the tree bear fruit only when the city was pure. The years flew by and the tree became vigorous and strong as

the priest grew old and feeble. One day, in 1829, a younger man said mass in the St. Louis Cathedral. Father Antonio was dead, at the age of eighty-one. The date palm was still growing a few years ago. In all its long life it never broke into blossom. It never bore fruit.

So much for the legend. What are the facts? There actually was a priest known as Pere Antoine, and he came from Granada in Spain. His attitude toward life and man underwent a radical change from one of oppression and domination to love and helpfulness. He did own the property at this location and he did live in a hut there. There was a date palm on the property for as long as oldtimers and their grandfathers could remember. It never bore fruit. Draw your own conclusions—most people like to believe the story.

Continuing down Dauphine Street, and turning right toward the river on St. Ann Street for one block, we come to the corner of St. Ann and Bourbon where we find CHAMPIGNY'S STORE, 741 Boubon Street. This is one of the few buildings in the fire-belt of 1788 that escaped destruction. Its date of construction is debated, but it was known to have been occupied in 1786 by Don Luis Champigny. It is probably over a century and three-quarters old, as the old-style half-round Spanish tiles attest. It was from this store that Eduardo di Martini, the Mafia gangster, stepped out one night in 1910, to be murdered, supposedly by another Mafia hoodlum, as he crossed Bourbon Street.

Returning to Orleans Street on the downtown river corner at Bourbon, you come to the site of the DAVIS GAMBLING SALON, the famous gambling-hall of the Creoles. Founded by John Davis in 1827, this was the most celebrated and most pretentious palace of chance during the most frenzied period of the gambling mania in New Orleans. Here fortunes changed hands at the turn of a single card. Many a plantation-owner who had worked a lifetime to gain wealth and respectability lost both in a single evening in its elaborate private rooms. It was here that Colonel John R. Grymes, a distinguished member of the New Orleans bar who defended Jean Lafitte, consistently lost fifty thousand dollars a year for ten years. (And that was during the years when a dollar was worth something.) Members of the Marigny family, at that time considered the wealthiest

people in the country, lost so much money in the gambling salon that they had to break up their extensive holdings to pay their debts. Many a hapless, frustrated man blew out his brains after a session in this Monte Carlo of the West.

On the downtown side of Orleans Street, at number 717, near Royal, is one of the most interesting centers of attraction in all Frenchtown, the OLD ORLEANS BALLROOM. Built in 1819 by John Davis, the proprietor of the gambling-hall a few doors away, it has served as ballroom, State Capitol and legislative hall, district court, banquet-hall, Carnival club, and finally—believe it or not—a convent for a Negro religious order.

One of the highlights of early New Orleans social life was the visit of the Marquis de Lafayette in 1826. A grand ball attended by the elite of Southern gentry was given here in his honor. When the government house was destroyed by fire two years later, the State Legislature held its meetings in the spacious rooms of this grand structure. In its long and colorful history it has been the gathering-place for a variety of pursuits and has seen an infinite number of notables and famed figures. But the thing for which it is perhaps most famous, or if one prefers, infamous, is that here is where the fabulous Quadroon Balls were given. Many a gay Creole blade, fortified with absinthe and angered by an actual or imagined insult, started an altercation that ended in a duel in St. Anthony's Garden a few steps away. During the social season white society would hold a ball one night, and next night there would be a quadroon affair. These continued for about fifty years prior to the Civil War, which brought their swan song.

A high-bred gentleman of the North was taken as a guest to one of these balls. Going out of curiosity, he met and fell madly in love with one of the quadroon maidens. He was delighted to find that she also loved him and he proposed. But marriage between white and colored people had been forbidden since the days of Bienville's Black Code of 1724. Not to be thwarted, the man opened a vein in his arm with a penknife, pricked his loved one's finger, and squeezed a drop of her blood into his arm. He then swore that he had Negro blood in him, the marriage took place, and they lived together happily for the rest of their lives.

The Ursuline Convent facade as seen through the entrance gate. Built in 1727 to house the Ursuline Nuns who arrived in that year with the first "casket girls"

In one kettle steaming coffee and in the other hot milk. An attendant pours French coffee for the visitors to the French Market.

Center of the French Market. Originally a Choctaw Indian trading post where Bienville purchased supplies and decided to build a capital.

In strange contrast is the use to which this building is put today. Due to the changing social order and the growth of the city in other directions, the property came up for sale in 1881. It was purchased by Thommy Lafon, a Negro philanthropist, as a convent for the Sisters of the Holy Family, a Catholic order of colored nuns. Many of the Quadroons took the veil and joined this group. Although extensive remodeling has been done, the dance floor, which was built of cypress three feet in thickness and at one time considered to be the finest in the world, still remains.

Back on Royal Street, at 715, slightly uptown on the alley, is the present location of the NEW ORLEANS ARTS AND CRAFTS CLUB, where student artists study under the guidance of the leading masters of the French Quarter Art Colony. For several years this group was located in the old Seignouret Mansion, at 520 Royal Street. It moved into this building in 1933. The galleries, which are open to the public, have a permanent display of art works by students and professionals in all price ranges and in great variety of medium and subject.

The very attractive narrow passageway on which the the Arts and Crafts Club is located is officially named PIRATES' ALLEY. This, so we are told, is because in the little shops along the way Lafitte's pirates covertly displayed and sold the booty that they pillaged from the ships off the Spanish Main. Because of its attractiveness it is the subject for many artists' paintings, etchings, and photographs. When the weather is good, artists from the club on the corner make attractive open-air displays of their work, similar to the art displays in Greenwich Village, in New York.

Across Pirates' Alley and in the rear of the St. Louis Cathedral, protected by a wrought iron fence, is a lovely cool park known as ST. ANTHONY'S GARDEN, where the duels generated at the Quadroon Balls in the Orleans Ballroom across the corner were fought. Convenient to the source of irritation, it was also handy to the Confessional, where absolution could be had quickly when remorse replaced the heat of passion. Truly New Orleans saw nothing incongruous in having its sin-spots conveniently located adjacent to her shrines.

This garden takes its name from another of old Frenchtown's

colorful legends. The story goes that Father Anthony, the same Père Antoine and Fray Antonio who lived two blocks away at Orleans and Dauphine Streets, was called so many times to this location to render extreme unction to the victims of duels that he built a hut on the spot. By being near the source of evil, and backed up by the presence of the church, the priest felt that he could more effectively carry on the work of guiding his people away from their sinful habits.

Across the street, and downtown a few steps, is an ancient landmark of an early period. The exact date of its construction is unknown, but records show that it was in existence during the Spanish regime. It has an attractive courtyard with symmetrical Spanish arches and an attractive balcony. Known as MAISON MONTEGUT, at 731 Royal Street, it was one of the former show-places of the Quarter.

17

MORE LEGEND AND LORE

On the uptown river corner of ROYAL AND ST. ANN STREETS one night each year there occurs a strange phenomenon that could take place only in New Orleans. On the coldest night of the year, when the temperature reaches the lowest point, an apparition of a naked, golden-brown, octoroon maiden can be seen walking back and forth along the edge of the roof. No-one knows just when this figure will appear, for as anyone who has lived in New Orleans knows, the weather there plays strange tricks and seems to delight in baffling forecasters. But those who have seen the specter say that she arises out of the recesses of the old building, to appear shivering and wringing her hands pitifully as she paces along her perilous path. In the full bloom of womanhood, the black nipples of her well-rounded breasts firm from the cold, her curved limbs sleek and lithe and her carriage erect, with the moonlight glistening on her brown back, she presents a most striking and eerie sight.

Tradition says that more than a century ago a beautiful octoroon slave girl named Luli fell desperately in love with her master, the owner of this house. For years she guarded her secret jealously, for she knew that nothing could come of such a love, but finally she could no longer stand having him day after day treat her only as a slave. One winter evening, as he smoked in his study, Luli threw herself at his feet and blurted out her love for him, imploring him to marry her. The

master took the whole affair as a huge joke, and told the girl that if she would prove her love by walking around the roof naked until he called her he would marry her. Thinking this ended the matter, he retired. But he underestimated the slave's devotion to him. To prove her obedience and love Luli stripped to her brown skin and bravely stepped out on the roof. But it was the coldest night to strike New Orleans in many a year. While the master, never realizing that Luli had taken him seriously, slept on, the devoted girl plodded back and forth hour after hour until she collapsed from exposure and exhaustion. Sick and broken-hearted, she never recovered, and today her protecting spirit continues to haunt the place, still desperately trying to prove her love to a master who cannot hear or understand.

Diagonally across the street, at 801 Royal Street, is an old, dilapidated Spanish building known as the CAFE DES REFUGIES. Lafcadio Hearn, reporting in 1878 on the scenes of George W. Cable's romances, identified this building as the scene of Cable's *Cafe des Exiles* and wrote, "There stands, at the corner of St. Ann(e) and Royal Streets, a one-story structure with Spanish tile roof, a building that has become absolutely shapeless with age, and may be torn away at any moment. It is now a mere hollow carcass—a shattered brick skeleton to which plaster and laths cling in patches only, like a shrunken hide upon the bones of some creature left to die and mummify under the sun. An obsolete directory, printed in 1845, assures us that the construction was considered immemorially old even then, but a remarkable engraving of it, which accompanies the above remark, shows it to have at that time possessed distinct Spanish features, and two neat entrances with semi-circular stone steps. In 1835 it was the Café des Refugies, frequented by fugitives from the Antilles, West Indian strangers, filibusterers, revolutionaries—all that singular class of Latin-Americans so strongly portrayed in Mr. Cable's 'Café des Exiles.' "

The half-round tiles that so intrigued Hearn—and which were a clue to the building's antiquity—are long since gone. The building has a tin roof today, but despite the fact that it was ready to "be torn away at any moment" and a "mere

Section of Chartres Street known as "Little Italy" or "Dauphin Square" where Mafia murder was commonplace. The St. Louis Cathedral in the background.

Jackson Square, heart and nerve center of the colony and the entire Mississippi Valley. Lower Pontalba building, Presbytère, St. Louis Cathedral and Cabildo.

Madison Street. The peculiar structure with the sloping roof at the rear of the building on the left is a former slave quarters and now a desirable apartment.

hollow carcass'' in 1878 it is still there. It is located on the edge of the fire area of 1788, and records show that it was standing in that year and possible before.

The eighteenth-century French settlers of Santo Domingo, finding an abundantly fertile and productive soil, rapidly became rich. With wealth came leisure and an aversion to work. More and more slaves were brought in, until the blacks far outnumbered the whites. The Negroes resented being held in servitude while the whites lived in luxury. As their numbers increased they became bold. A series of uprisings took place, and the blacks drove their masters from the island. Most of the refugees came to New Orleans, and this building at the corner of Royal and St. Ann Streets became their headquarters and gathering-place. Arriving around the turn of the nineteenth century, these emigrants were a cultured, genteel, educated group, dispossessed of their belongings and wanting merely to re-establish themselves. They brought to Frenchtown much of the culture of old France. By 1835, however, the time of which Hearn spoke, the habitués of the Café des Refugiés had become adventurers, revolutionists, and quite likely pirates.

Cable's charming ability for mixing fact with fiction in logical and interesting proportions has considerably enhanced the already fascinating history of Frenchtown.

It was here in 1814 that John Wesley Jarvis painted on a mahogany board the only known likeness of Jean and Pierre Lafitte and their associate Captain Dominique You. The painting now hangs in the Cabildo.

Those who would like to purchase souvenirs of old Spanish coins such as the picayune, trade dollar, or other pieces of ancient coinage may do so across the street at the pleasant little ORLEANS COIN SHOP, 814 Royal Street. The proprietor also has a stock of old paper legal tender notes, and various Confederate items of interest and historic value.

Back on the woods side, at 823 Royal Street, is a former residence of the fabulous DANIEL CLARK, an Irish adventurer, politician, Lothario, and grand-scale fence, who became early New Orleans' leading merchant, her richest citizen, and first representative to Congress. He was one of the most unusual and controversial figures to emerge from this section.

In 1786, when Clark was twenty-one years old he came to New Orleans, and immediately plunged into a career that was soon to make him an extremely wealthy man. Shrewd and not too particular as to how he obtained his money he allied himself with the leading political figures of the time, thereby obtaining inside information and special privileges that permitted him to make a fortune in the growing trade of the colony. Although not an American citizen, through his personality and connections he became appointed United States Consul in New Orleans. A first-level opportunist, Clark is said to have been the one who, visualizing the vast possibilities of the smuggling trade, backed Jean Lafitte and started him on the road to fame. Until Lafitte organized his buccaneers into a business-like combine they were merely a small number of crude ruffians fighting among themselves. Under Lafitte's leadership and the guidance of the cunning brain of Clark they grew into a powerful, compact organization that defied the authorities and controlled an enormous illegal international trade.

Along with other successful young businessmen, Clark patronized the leading confectioner of Frenchtown, one Jerome De Grange, whose store was located on the present site of the Pontalba buildings, facing Jackson Square. De Grange had wooed and won the popular Marie Julie Carrière, a clear-eyed, olive-skinned, voluptuously beautiful woman. Known as "Zulime," Mrs. De Grange helped her husband in the store, and she and Clark became friendly.

Some time before New Orleans came to the United States, Clark asked the confectioner to go abroad to look after some investments that he had in France. When De Grange returned he was informed that Clark and Zulime had been married. This was supposed to have been in the spring of 1802. Clark claimed to have found evidence which showed that De Grange had previously been married to someone other than Zulime and that therefore her marriage to the confectioner was void. De Grange denied this, and although records were never produced proving that Clark and Zulime had actually been married, they continued to live together in Philadelphia. In June 1805 a daughter was born to them. This laid the foundation

for one of the most complicated and famous legal cases in American history. It lasted over a period of sixty years, cost millions of dollars, drove several people to early deaths, sparked several romances, and affected the lives of actually thousands of people. It was known as the Myra Clark Gaines case. Myra Clark was the daughter born to Clark and Zulime in Philadelphia and the controversy was over Clark's fabulous fortune. The big point at issue throughout was the legitimacy of Myra. The records of this case filled several volumes and provide material for innumerable books.

It was also in this house that Andrew Jackson was welcomed to New Orleans on December 2, 1814, by Governor William C. C. Claiborne, who had been wounded in a duel by Daniel Clark, its former owner. General Jackson had come to prepare his defense against the British, which culminated in the Battle of New Orleans a few weeks later.

The old home has a very attractive courtyard, with a beautiful curving stairway and two Spanish arches.

Across the street from the Daniel Clark home, at 830 Royal Street, is an old building known as the MARCHAND HOUSE, which boasts an unusual winding stairway leading from the courtyard to the upper apartments. This stairway has proved to be of great interest to architects and artists because of its peculiar beauty. Note the unusual balcony design and *garde defrise* on the De Jean House two doors uptown at 824 Royal Street.

Around the corner to the right at 632 Dumaine Street, is a venerable old building known as MADAME JOHN'S LEGACY. This is an historical shrine. It is the oldest building in the entire Mississippi Valley and, having been outside of the zone of the two great fires, can trace a colorful and eventful history back to 1726. It was built by Jean Pascal, a French sea-captain, on property he obtained from La Compagne des Indes, which controlled Louisiana at that time. It is a bona fide example of the earliest type of construction of a pretentious French residence. No nails were used in the structure, rigidity being obtained by mortised joints and wooden pegs. The building is at variance with the other town houses in the Creole Quarter because of its antiquity. It is a raised cottage, plantation-type

house, the lower floor consisting of thick brick walls and a brick floor and the upper story constructed of wood. Captain Pascal was only permitted to enjoy his home for a short time. He lived here with his daughter until he was slain by the Natchez Indians, who massacred many settlers in 1729.

The home has had about twoscore owners since it was built, one of them René Beluche, master of the *Spy*, one of the ships of Lafitte's smuggler fleet. But the tradition that has captured the old place and given it the name by which it is best known comes from that famed writer of Frenchtown tales, that we have already heard about, George W. Cable, who made this building the locale of another charming story.

According to Cable, "This was once the home of a gay gentleman whose first name happened to be John." John was unmarried and lived here with his parents until they died. When John himself lay on his deathbed, he called to his side a beautiful quadroon named Zalli. If John had been married his wife would have been called "Madame John." But John had no wife and Zalli was known throughout the Quarter by that title. As he lay dying, he told Zalli that he was leaving the house to her and her child, 'Tite Poulette. Again in the words of Cable, "She and the 'little one' inherited the house, such as it was." The house has been known ever since as "Madame John's Legacy."

But, Cable's story continues, Madame John failed to hold on to the house and, "with the fatal caution which characterizes ignorance, sold the property and put the proceeds in a bank, which made haste to fail. She put on Widow's weeds, and wore them still when 'Tite Poulette 'had seventeen,' as the frantic lads would say."

Madame John's Legacy is rightly popular with historian, writer, and artist. It is one of the highlights of Frenchtown.

Returning toward the woods across Royal Street, the second house from the corner, at 707 Dumaine is a peculiar building that is also an oldtimer of Spanish days. A one-story, plastered-brick structure it has a top of authentic curved Spanish tiles that look like a honeycomb. It was built in 1800 by a Spanish soldier, Don Joachim de la Torre, who was a Captain of Engineers in the service of the King of Spain, and it is known as

The St. Ann Portales building which with its counterpart on the St. Peter Street side of Jackson Square were the first apartment buildings in the United States

A foggy morning in the Place d'Armes, Paris. An inner gate of Jackson Square with the St. Louis Cathedral in the shadowy background. The lamps are reproductions of the gas lamps that lighted the heart of Frenchtown a century ago.

the KRISTIAN KOPPIG COTTAGE, so named by Lafcadio Hearn from one of George W. Cable's characters who supposedly lived there.

Continuing along Dumaine to Bourbon Street and a block to the right, on the uptown woods corner of Bourbon and St. Philip you find another old structure of the early French period, known affectionately as LAFITTE'S BLACKSMITH SHOP. Also outside of the fire-belts it goes back to the French period, and because of its type of construction it may be one of the earliest and oldest buildings in the Quarter. It is of brick between posts covered by plaster construction, a style known as *briquettes entre poteaux* among the early French colonists. Unfortunately the initial records determining the exact date of construction are not available.

Many legends have fastened themselves to this building, but the most appealing is that it was once occupied by the Pirate Jean Lafitte and his brother Pierre and was operated as a blacksmith shop as a blind for their major activities of dealing in both yellow and black gold. The slaves of the Lafittes are supposed to have hammered out much of the wrought iron that appears today throughout Frenchtown.

It is now operated as a combination restaurant and uppercase drink dispensary. Excellent meals are served in the patio during clement weather, and inside beside a cheerful fire in the fireplace when judgment indicates. Peculiar potables—specialties of the proprietor's imagination—are served at tables or from the oddly-shaped bar, said to have been designed after the bends in the Mississippi at New Orleans. The rafters have never seen paint, the floors are rough-hewn, and light comes from candles sticking in rum demi-johns.

This is really Frenchtown!

Proceeding along St. Philip Street toward Royal, the cast iron fence of GRAPEVINE DESIGN on the downtown river corner of St. Philip and Royal Streets is interesting and worthy of inspection. This is one of the many unusual designs that will be encountered on all sides as you saunter through Frenchtown.

On the right, at 1026 Royal Street, is an OLD SPANISH COTTAGE that might well have been the home of another of Cable's people, since he is known to have taken his charac-

ters and locations from real life. One of them, he wrote, lived on Royal Street in a "little one-story yellow-washed tenement—with its two glass doors protected by batten shutters, and its low, weed-grown tile roof sloping out over the sidewalk." Definitely one of the older buildings in Frenchtown, it was built in 1790 by another Captain in the Spanish army. It is a good example of the middle-class home of the time.

Turning right at the corner of Ursulines Street, and on the right side of the street at 620 Ursulines Street about midway in the square, is a typical Spanish casa that has the largest patio in the French Quarter. It is known as CASA LALAND and its date of construction is not known, but it is believed to be one of the first Spanish residences and is therefore nearly two centuries old. A tragic event took place here about a century and a half ago. The owner, Louis de LaLand, was returning home one night when he was accosted by a rough-looking character. Attempting to defend himself, LaLand was killed on his doorstep, and when the murderer was apprehended he turned out to be a pirate from Barataria in New Orleans on a spree.

This building has a characteristic *garde de frise* of the period, a fan-shaped iron guard with sharp pointed spikes on the outside.

Returning again to Royal Street, on the right side heading downtown we are near the end of the famous STREET OF BALCONIES, as Royal Street is sometimes called. Note the delicate scrollwork of the balcony railings as you go through Frenchtown. Look for the unusual lamps, brackets, scrollwork, and panels. True, they have seen better days, but they give us an excellent insight into the artistry and workmanship of earlier times. On the right, at 1122 Royal Street, is a distinctive design with a lyre as a basic motif. On the left, at 1125 Royal Street, is a unique door having an ornate cast iron panel with part of the lionhead knocker below, the knocker part having been lost some years ago. Only in Frenchtown, U. S. A., can one see such exhibits as these.

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AND, THE HAUNTED HOUSE

And now, on the uptown river corner of Royal and Governor Nicholls Streets, is what many believe to be the most celebrated exhibit in Frenchtown, the incomparable HAUNTED HOUSE. This three-story mansion was one of the most magnificent showplaces in New Orleans in the early 1800's. Its mistress, the lovely, charming, and aristocratic Madame Marie Delphine LaLaurie, was known all over Louisiana as the most gracious and envied hostess in the old city. She dominated and directed the course of Creole society, and to her house came the greats of New Orleans and the famous of faraway places. It was the social focal point of the South, to all outward appearances the center of respectability and propriety.

Madame LaLaurie's father was a French nobleman who fled to New Orleans at the time of the French revolution to escape the fate doled out to aristocrats. He met, wooed, and won the belle of New Orleans society, and Marie Delphine was one of five children born to them. Raised in the cradle of luxury, beautiful, and educated abroad Marie Delphine had her selection of the most eligible males. On June 11, 1800, she married Don Roman de Lopez y Augula, a Spanish nobleman who was then Intendant of the colony. After Louisiana became American soil Don Roman was appointed the first Consul General of Spain to the United States. Fray Antonio de Sedella officiated at the wedding ceremony, which was held in the St.

Louis Cathedral. In 1804 Don Roman was ordered back to Spain. Stopping off in Havana, he was stricken with fever and died.

Marie Delphine, who had accompanied him, returned to New Orleans, and a few years later married Jean Blanque, the merchant, lawyer, and banker who, with Daniel Clark, was secretly associated with Jean Lafitte in his piratical ventures. Blanque purchased the house at 409 Royal Street and moved in with his bride. They entertained lavishly, as befitted their prominence and position. In 1816 Jean Blanque also died, and his widow—still young and beautiful—was eagerly sought after as a matrimonial prize. She was then in the full development of mature beauty and had inherited fortunes from two wealthy husbands besides the one left her by her father. She remained single, however, until June 1825, when she married Dr. Leonard Louis LaLaurie, a native of France who had come to New Orleans to establish a medical practice. Dr. LaLaurie and his wife built this building at the corner of Royal and Hospital (now Governor Nicholls) Streets and established themselves as the social leaders of New Orleans.

But all was not as it appeared on the surface. Strange reports began to be whispered around about the LaLaurie mansion and its charming mistress. Slaves dancing in Congo Square spoke in hushed tones of weird and extraordinary goings-on in this house of supposed respectability. It appears that the rumors were right. For the fascinating and beautiful woman who entranced her guests by the keenness of her wit and the charm of her personality was not what she seemed—she had the heart of a demon and the twisted soul of a sadist.

One moonlight night in 1833, a passer-by heard the scream of a child from the house on Royal Street. He looked through the open doorway, just in time to see a little Negro girl race out of the mansion into the courtyard, pursued by Madame LaLaurie who was savagely applying a whip. Around the courtyard they ran and back into the house, the piteous wailing of the child punctuated by the cursing of her assailant. The onlooker was transfixed, not knowing whether he should interfere or not. The sounds of frightened footsteps and the child's shrieking echoed and re-echoed as the pursuit continued through

the house and up the rear stairs. The crack of the whip was accented by a dull thud every time it struck and cut deep into soft flesh. From the rear of the upstairs the sounds continued, coming closer and increasing in intensity, until a blind was flung open on the balcony and the fear-crazed child appeared. Driven to the edge, and with nowhere to turn to avoid the cruel lashing, the desperate girl screamed horribly and leaped into space. The shrieking stopped abruptly as the pitiful little body was dashed into insensibility on the stones of the courtyard below. The frozen spectator shook himself into action by sheer will and raced for the police. When they pulled up, they were met by a calm, suave woman who graciously invited them in.

"What? Why, such a story is ridiculous! Go ahead, you may search the building."

The officers sheepishly looked through the house, but could find no trace of violence. Of course, the report was unthinkable. Wasn't Madame Delphine LaLaurie above question? They apologized profusely and left, cuffing the man who had made such a ridiculous report that cast reflection upon one of New Orleans' most beloved citizens.

"Get on with you now—and don't come back!"

But evil had taken root, and ugly rumors were still whispered about the house on Royal Street.

On the morning of April 10, 1834, fire broke out in the stately mansion. The fire department raced over the cobblestones to the house and set to work with their primitive hand-pumper and crude bucket-brigades. A crowd gathered quickly, filling the streets. In time of tragedy personal grudges are forgotten, and various individuals in the crowd helped to carry valuable furniture out of the house to save it from destruction.

In order to make an indirect attack on the flames, a detachment of firemen cut a hole through the roof and came down into the attic. As they entered they stumbled over what felt like human bodies. Groans and whimpering sounds came out of the darkness. Bringing lights to the scene they found a horrible and unbelievable sight. Amidst a shocking array of instruments of torture, seven mutilated slaves—three men and four women—lay locked in chains on the floor of the attic,

practically naked, with deep lacerations and festering wounds. Horribly emaciated from long inactivity and starvation the pitiable creatures were more dead than alive, barely able to choke or cry out in the acrid smoke. In describing this appalling sight, Jerome Byan, publisher of the New Orleans *Bee*, who was an on-the-spot spectator, wrote, "We saw where the collar and manacles had cut their way into their quivering flesh. For several months they had been confined in those dismal dungeons, with no other nutrient than a handful of gruel and an insufficient quantity of water, suffering the tortures of the damned and languidly awaiting death as a relief to their sufferings."

The chains were broken, and the pathetic creatures were carried to the street and rushed to the Charity Hospital. Here they were given treatment and food. For two of the group--a younger male who apparently had been tortured more than the rest when he showed spirit, and an aged woman--the reaction was too great. They died in the ward. One of the remaining five told a piteous story. At Madame Delphine's order they had been clamped into chains for minor or even imagined offenses by Bastien, a tall, strong mulatto who eagerly carried out his mistress' slightest command. Regularly the Madame came to the garret to beat them with an iron rod sharpened at the end to a needle point. With this she flogged the helpless creatures or gouged them as the spirit moved her. She seemed elated in the presence of blood. Bastien, as well-fed and plump as the victims were starved and emaciated, assisted willingly in the torture. Later it was said that Bastien's position in the LaLaurie mansion was more than that of trusted servant.

The instruments of torture were gathered up and taken to the Calabozo. Reports of the fire in the LaLaurie home and what had been found there spread over Frenchtown, and crowds flocked to the Cabildo to view the horrible chains, spiked collars, gouges, knives, thumbscrews, and other fiendish torture-devices that covered a large table. Upon seeing these relics of the Dark Ages and realizing that they had recently been put to use, the people became enraged and charged furiously up Chartres and Royal Streets to the LaLaurie place, loudly vowing vengeance.

Façade of the Cabildo showing its arches, pediment and the distinctive wrought iron panels at the middle floor windows. The design on the side panels differs from that on the face.

Massive wrought iron gates at the public entrance to the Citadel.

In the meantime, a jurist, Judge J. F. Conange of the Criminal Court, and Jacques Montreuil, friends of the LaLauries, went inside with some others to see if they could be of help. Hearing a cry that might have come from a trapped animal, Judge Conange and Monsieur Montreuil went into the kitchen. There, bent double and chained to the stove, was a seventy-three year old mammy, crying helplessly and praying for deliverance. Just then Dr. LaLaurie appeared and the Judge asked him what it was all about.

"Mind your own God-damned business!" snarled the doctor.

Overwhelmed with revulsion, Judge Conange called for help, broke the chain, and carried the wretched slave to safety. As he did so, the poor thing wailed and cried, telling her rescuer that it was she who had set fire to the building. It had been her way of appealing for help, of trying to inform the outside world of what went on in that accursed house. Death was preferable to living any longer in what had become a house of hate. Judge Conange could hardly believe what he heard, but he had to believe what he had seen. It was monstrous.

By now the crowd in the streets had become a vengeful mob. In their rage they smashed to bits the priceless furniture and tore to shreds the lovely draperies that had been carried from the mansion. A milling mass filled Royal Street and spilled over in both directions into what is now Governor Nicholls Street (then Hospital Street). When the poor old crone was brought out the people seethed with defiance and protest. They waited expectantly for the police or soldiers to come and take the LaLauries to prison. Hours passed, but the police did not appear. The crowd became a swaying, howling mob, and cries broke out, "Let's tear the place down!" The fire had been brought under control and several onlookers started toward the door. As they approached, the mulatto butler suddenly appeared, slammed the doors, and bolted them from the rear. This stopped them for the moment. They hesitated indecisively.

Suddenly the gates were thrust open, throwing back the more adventuresome individuals who were in the portal. They were barely able to jump out of the way as a team of giant Percherons, pulling a rich black-and-gold carriage, dashed madly through the gates into the crowd. Lashing the horses into a

frenzy on the box was the sleek mulatto butler, and crouched in the back seat behind the draped windows was the veiled figure of Madame LaLaurie. So sudden was the appearance of the brass-bound carriage plunging upon them that the crowd fell back in terror, to avoid the crashing beasts and the sting of the whip wielded by the strong arms of the coachman. By the time the men in the crowd could realize what was happening and make some attempt to stop the escaping madwoman, the carriage was well out Hospital Street and then into the open. Madame LaLaurie was gone.

When they realized that they had been outwitted and that their quarry had eluded them, the mob became violent again. Several hundred people raced madly after the carriage, screaming and cursing. The rest turned toward the house and swarmed into it like a wave of locusts, destroying everything in their path. Doors and windows were smashed, floors ripped up, the remainder of the furnishings were demolished, and what damage the fire had started the fury of the mob completed. At this point the police and soldiers appeared, and order was finally restored at the point of bayonets. The crowd continued to mill about the corner, but their appetite of hate had been sated and no further violence broke out.

Menwhile the LaLauries were safe. According to the most reasonable explanation, Dr. LaLaurie foreseeing that the mob would soon get out of hand, had left instructions with his wife, and had fled through the back way of the burning house. He had gone out the Bayou Road to Bayou St. John and engaged a small schooner (it is whispered with the help of the Mayor), and this was in readiness when the carriage arrived carrying Madame LaLaurie. They immediately set sail out the Bayou and across Lake Pontchartrain to Mandeville, a small settlement on the north side of the lake. From there they went to New York and then on to Paris. It was reported that a resident of New Orleans who was traveling in France a few years later recognized Madame LaLaurie in Paris and told some friends there the story of why she had left the Crescent City. Immediately the LaLauries were hissed and ostracized in Paris. Madame LaLaurie fled again and is reported later to have met a horrible death when thrown from her horse while hunting.

The Cabildo or Spanish Capitol Building of early New Orleans with the St. Louis Cathedral next door. Both were built in 1794, the Cabildo just after the second great fire and the Cathedral, attached by the flag, finished exactly before. The structure on the right is the St. Ann Street Pontalba building now owned by the State of Louisiana.

As for the mulatto butler, he had no place to go after he had placed his mistress aboard the schooner. He knew that he could not return to the mansion or to his own people, for they hated him and would have torn him limb from limb. His white protectors were gone, so all he could do was ride around until he could decide where to go. Paying little attention to where the horses were leading him, he suddenly realized that he was back in Frenchtown and in the neighborhood of his former home. The horses had no place to go either except to the only house they knew. Suddenly someone in the crowd spotted the carriage. Before the startled Bastien could turn around and flee they were upon him. They pulled him down off the box and literally beat him to a pulp. The once proud and mighty mulatto had given his life for the mistress who had run out and left him to his ignominious end. The carriage was smashed to splinters and the horses were driven away.

On the following day the authorities made a thorough inspection of the gutted premises. In a shallow well in the courtyard they found the bones of a small girl. Digging in the garden, that is a part of most of the larger courtyards, searchers found three skeletons—mute testimony to the veracity of the early mutterings in Voodoo circles.

The house was rebuilt, but from the moment that Madame LaLaurie's carriage burst through the courtyard gates it acquired the name "Haunted House," by which it is known today. It has since had a hectic existence. People did not stay there long; they couldn't stand it. All sorts of stories were told of strange lights and shadowy objects with skeleton-heads protruding that flitted from room to room, their forms draped in wispy white coverings. Hoarse, muffled voices like those from a charnel-house, and the sound of clanking metal, came out over the night air. Many a brave soul who did not believe the tales about the mansion lived there and regretted his action. In the dead of night, when all is quiet, the shriek of a young child in agony rings out. This is followed by the cracking of a whip and the harsh voice of a cursing woman. Two pairs of footsteps, one light, the other heavy, race through the house and up the stairs. The window of the garret flies open, and out jumps the ghost of a small Negro girl. Right behind her is the

specter of a beautiful middle-aged woman. The girl hesitates an instant and the woman flails out at her. The child turns, and with a strident wail leaps in terror from the roof, her shrill cry echoing on the still night air, and there is a thud as the body strikes the flagstones of the courtyard. Appearing in the courtyard an instant later, the woman picks up the crushed little body, carries it over to the well, and throws it in. This, they tell us, happens every year at the start of the social season in New Orleans.

During the Civil War the house was used as Union Headquarters, and in the carpetbag era it was turned into a school for poor children, taking in both white and colored. In 1874 a detachment of the Crescent White League, which arose to a position of power in defense of white supremacy, marched on the building, expelled the colored children and broke up the school. Ten years later a Conservatory of Music opened in the ancient structure, but this met with failure. The house was a jinx. Successively it became a gambling-house, cheap tenement, and saloon; but nothing lasted very long.

For years it was closed and was thought to be uninhabited. In 1892 a drunken sailor with no place to go broke in and spent the night. Awakening in the morning, with the effects of his jag still on him, he found himself staring into the face of a partially-clothed, nearly-decomposed corpse, beside which he had been sleeping. Screaming like a madman, he dashed to the street and babbled his story to the police. Examining what was left of the body, which had been dead for a long time, the police found an old watch which identified the individual as a member of one of the best families of New Orleans. He was an elderly man and had disappeared about five years before. A nationwide search had been made for him and he had been given up for dead. Around him was a collection of bric-a-brac which indicated that he had been living in the Haunted House for a long time. After the body had been removed, representatives of the owners arranged to have the place cleaned out. A colored man found an old cloth bag in the dead man's effects. He was just about to toss it into the junkpile when his curiosity overcame him and he cut the sack open. Reaching in, he brought out a wad of currency. Upon

seeing what he held in his hand he became so excited that his hands began to tremble, and bills of large denomination spilled out over the floor. They totalled over ten thousand dollars, a fortune in those days.

The LaLaurie mansion today is a social welfare institution known as the Warrington House, conducted by a Mr. William J. Warrington, a philanthropist who spent his life and fortune aiding the unfortunate. It gives no indication of its tragic and awesome heritage.

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RUES CHARTRES ET GALLATIN

In passing, it is interesting to look at the block diagonally across from the Haunted House. According to an old map which Governor Miro reported the extent of the fire of 1788 to the King of Spain, this block was then an EARLY CEMETERY. The map also shows that Hospital Street was about the limit of settlement at that time.

Turning right on Governor Nicholls Street for one block, we must imagine that the old Hospital Street ended at Chartres Street. There, and for more than two blocks in the area encircled by the river and Barracks, Chartres, and part of Ursulines Streets, were the old FRENCH BARRACKS. Constructed by the French as the official Army post, they were completed in 1758. Here were stationed the French regiments of the line until 1763, when Louisiana was ceded to the Spanish monarchy. Then came their occupation in 1769 by the troops of the cruel Bloody O'Reilly and his successors; then in 1803 the transfer to Laussat, the French Prefect, and their delivery to General Wilkinson for the United States. In the quadrangle surrounded by the military buildings took place the public execution of Lafrénière, Marquis and Milhet, top leaders in the rebellion against Spain, together with three others, by order and in the presence of O'Reilly in 1769. A remnant of the ancient military quarters still stands at the corner of Chartres and Barracks Streets.

Making another right turn on Chartres Street and heading

uptown in the direction of the modern city, near the end of the block on the right at 1113 Chartres Street you come to a single-story structure with a raised basement and two curved flanking granite stairways with unique iron railings. Known as the BEAUREGARD HOUSE, it was the residence of General P. T. G. Beauregard, the officer in command of confederate forces during the bombardment of Fort Sumter, at the beginning of the Civil War. Here also was born Paul Morphy, who became the world's champion chess-player and who later lived at the old Patio Royal building on 417 Royal Street. The building is more than a century and a quarter old and has been the residence of a number of famous writers.

Here in 1909 a fine old Italian family named Giacona operated a profitable wine business. The Mafia was going full blast at the time and preying like vultures on their Italian countrymen. Attempting to shake down the Giacona family, they were defied, and the wine-merchant with his sons set up an armed defense around the house. One night the Mafia struck, and when the attack was over three hoodlums lay dead in the courtyard and another who had tried to escape was picked up badly wounded a short distance away. Two weeks later a covered wagon drove up Chartres Street. As it approached the Giacona residence a side of the wagon dropped down, revealing nearly a dozen Sicilians armed with sawed-off shotguns. Stopping opposite the building, they raked it with buckshot fire. Fortunately none of the family was in at the time. Marks of this heinous attack are still visible in the front of the building.

Across the street, occupying the spacious downtown river corner of Ursulines and Chartres Streets in a part of the area adjoining the old military post, is the original URSULINE CONVENT. This dignified and imposing structure has long competed with Madame John's Legacy on Dumaine Street for the distinction of being the oldest building in the Mississippi Valley. In the early days of the settlement Governor Bienville realized that his people needed spiritual guidance, and upon his appeal the French King sent a group of Ursuline nuns to Nouvelle Orléans in 1727, headed by Mother Superior Marie Tranchepain. They lived in the house of Governor Bienville when they arrived, and construction was immediately started

on this building. It was completed in 1734 and opened with fitting ceremonies, attended by Governor Bienville and other celebrities. As with other early French structures, no nails were used in it, all the planks and rafters being joined together with wooden pegs. Linen was used over the windows to let in light. Adze marks still can be seen on the beams, which were rough-hewn from the cypress trees in the swamps surrounding old New Orleans. Pretentious and impressive on the outside, the building is plain and austere in the interior, as befits the home of a religious order. After being occupied by the Ursulines for ninety years it was turned over to the Catholic Church in 1824, and a school for boys was established. In 1831 the State Legislature, which had been meeting in the Orleans Ballroom on Orleans Street since the destruction of the State House, held their sessions in the nunnery. After that the convent became the home of the Archbishop of New Orleans, and it is now the Presbytère of St. Mary's Church, built adjoining it in 1846.

Inside the convent is a splendid oil painting of a cat that accompanied Mother Superior Tranchepain on her long and hazardous voyage from France to the New World. It lived for many years in the convent as a pet and protector against the prolific rats that abound in New Orleans. It is said to have been the ancestor of all present-day felines in the South.

The courtyard of the old convent is entered through a brick-and-plaster *conciergerie*, one of the few remaining gateways of this type in the United States.

Continuing along Chartres Street toward uptown, at the corner of Chartres and St. Philip Streets, you come to the famed area known as SLAUGHTER SQUARE, so named in honor of seventeen Black Hand murders that occurred adjacent to the corner during the infamous reign of terror of the insidious Mafia. This area is still known as "Little Italy."

Turning toward the river, at the corner of St. Philip and Decatur Streets is the spot known as the CIRCLE OF DEATH, an area of about thirty feet where three more Mafia killings took place within a short period of time. One victim was a member who, after learning the secrets of the society, thought he could get out. He did. Another was a cocksure young hood

Arches of the Cabildo.

Frenchtown sightseeing carriage. Behind the carriage is where the Mafia chieftain Guiseppe Esposito was captured setting off a series of events that nearly precipitated the United States into war with Italy.

An old slave auction block on the Cabildo Museum with many years of historical interest.

Scene of early violence on St. Peter Street near the Cabildo where several Yugoslavian sailors (their white bellbottoms) from patrol duties in Calcutta fighting

who tried to set himself up as the head of a competing mob. The third was a harmless old Italian woman, Della Coliva, proprietor of a candy store who was unable to pay the tribute demanded by the extortionists and was shot down one night as she closed up her store to go home to her family. Nice place! This was the breeding-spot and the training-ground, the pattern and forerunner for the colossal crime rule that overran this country during the Prohibition era. It all started right here. No honor can be attributed to Frenchtown for this infamous contribution to history.

It is hardly worth while for there is no longer anything to see—but if you wish you can turn left and walk a short block down Decatur Street to Ursulines and see the head of Gallatin Street, aptly referred to as THE SEWER. In the period before the Civil War this was, if not the lowest, certainly one of the lowest places on earth. Today a drab stretch of two short blocks, smelling of fish and decaying garbage, between Ursulines and Barracks Streets, it is made up almost entirely of unimpressive loading-docks and warehouses that make a strange contrast to what it was a century ago.

One can hardly believe that this unassuming, commonplace back street was once the canker of America. Yet it was the very hub of crime, sensuality, licentiousness, bestiality, and degeneracy. It was the lair of the lowest Black Hand criminal, the refuge of the most degenerate sex variant, the retreat of the foulest harlot, and the last resort of all human vermin. Here gathered the scum of the earth, spewed off the tramp schooners of foreign lands and funnelled in from other parts of the country that wouldn't have it. These unsavory characters fed and nourished the reeking collection of fence shops, whore-houses, clip-joints, barrel-houses, gambling-halls, dope dens, and dance halls that made up the Sewer.

The Sewer slept by day, but only because it had to sleep sometime and the light of day was too pure for such as inhabited it. Just as soon as the last glow of evening faded into darkness, Gallatin Street came to life. Shutters swung outward, and the clinking of beer glasses and the tinkling of cheap pianos announced to all and sundry that the Sewer was open for business. Bring on your whiskey, your women, or what have

you. Let restraint be gone!—and it was. Straight murder was commonplace, actually a daily affair. Sometimes several brutal killings took place on one night. Most of these were the riffraff killing off the weak, with no trace of who the victims were and nobody much concerned. But besides the regular flow of derelicts who were disposed of in the river as a matter of course there were more than a hundred unsolved murders of persons of more or less consequence. The police never went near the place for the simple reason that they didn't dare. The Sewer enforced its own basic law—it took care of its own dead.

Typical of the dives on Gallatin Street was Mother Mame's, a two story barrel-house brothel of the lowest sort. On the ground floor was a dance-hall with a row of barrels down the side and a massive bouncer standing guard. Prospective customers came in, picked up a thick glass, paid their nickle for beer and fifteen cents for alleged whiskey, and served themselves cafeteria style, under the watchful orbs of the bouncer. Customers were expected to keep buying in Mother Mame's, as in all the other joints, or clear out. If they slacked off, another big bruiser was right after them to keep the money and liquor flowing. Between drinks, girls dressed only in shoes and a thin, revealing gown plied their wiles to encourage the men to drink and then accompany them to the rooms upstairs. If the men got drunk enough the women simply emptied their pockets, and the bouncers threw the victims bodily into the street. Occasionaly one would protest or resist, whereupon the big bruiser would escort him to the alley, bash his brains out, and toss the body into the river. Of course everybody who came in couldn't be dealt with in this manner, for a simple economic principle, the law of diminishing returns, would have gone into effect and there would have been no more customers to bleed. But the stream of humanity that poured into the Sewer seemed unlimited, and the majority did receive a modicum of value for their money. The whiskey was progressively watered and those who didn't spend all their money downstairs or pass out before it was gone were accomodated in any manner they chose in the rooms upstairs by the bar belles.

One of the characters of Mother Mame's was "Torchy" Williams, whose real name was Nellie Ann Kalas. She got her

start in the coal district of Scranton, where she claimed to have been seduced by her own father when she was thirteen years of age. He is alleged to have put her into a house of prostitution and demanded her earnings. She stayed there a while, but resented turning over her take to her father and fled to Chicago, then on to New Orleans, where she went into a bordello on Dauphine Street. Redheaded and voluptuous, Torchy was popular and sought-after, but she had a chip on her shoulder and a violent temper. Before long she began to get rough with her customers. Matters grew worse and she was tossed out of her berth. She then took up with a Bourbon Street bartender who set her up in business and lived with her. She couldn't get along with her girls, who claimed that she was domineering and bossy. It seems that she took all of the best customers and interfered with the other girls' affairs. Furthermore, she tried to take too large a percentage of the girls' earnings. One night Torchy got into a squabble with one of the girls over a present that a particularly appreciative client had given to his entertainer. The redhead tried to take it away, and a battle started. The bartender who had an investment in the place and also in the tempestuous Torchy intervened. Her temper flared, and she whipped up her dress and pulled out a small, razor-sharp knife which she kept handily lashed to her thigh. Made for the redheaded bombshell by a Lascar sailor, it had a vicious, curved tip, like a shoemaker's blade. Screaming like a ferocious tiger, she sailed into the bartender, slashing his face with the knife and opening his belly before she was pulled off and subdued. The man did not die but he was badly disfigured; one eye was gone and he was close to death for months. Torchy had to move on. She went from bordello to bordello, but kept each place in such a turmoil that she was eventually kicked out. She finally had established such a reputation for meanness that nobody would have anything to do with her and she had no place to go. She wound up in the Sewer, working in a dope-den and sin-mill called the Pekin House.

But she was too tough even for Gallatin Street. She hadn't been there two weeks when she was in serious trouble. The third mate of a ship that had just arrived from Shanghai came to the Pekin House one night and let it be known that he had

money to spend and wanted to be entertained. This was his first visit to the Sewer, so he didn't realize that he had just pronounced his death-sentence. One of the regular tarts collared him. While she was plying him with cheap liquor to get him befuddled enough to go upstairs with her so that he could be relieved of his cash as quickly as possible, Torchy blew in. Sensing the presence of cash, she tried to take over. The strumpet who had staked first claim resented this poaching on what she considered her private premises and swung at Torchy, at the same time expressing her opinion of the interloper in vile and voluable invective. Torchy let go at the noisy one with an uppercut to the chin, and they tangled, winding up on the floor in a twisting, snarling cat-fight. What little clothes they wore were soon ripped off in the scuffle, and fingernails ripped into soft flesh. Torchy got gouged in the eye and went stark mad, sinking her teeth in retaliation into her adversary's throat. While the other gurgled and thrashed, Torchy hung on like an infuriated ferret. Knowing her reputation and her savage temper, no-one interfered—not even the bouncers. Finally all was quiet. Torchy got up, her mouth red with blood, but the other did not move. She was dead, her jugular vein torn open. Her body was whisked out the back door, through the alley, and into the river—an incident in the life of Gallatin Street.

Not to be deprived of her spoils, Torchy then returned to the victim, who had by this time been loaded with cheap liquor flavored with knockout drops. He was too befogged to realize what was happening to him or to care very much, so by brushing against him suggestively and letting his hands caress her soft curves it was easy for her to entice him into a small room on the floor above. He fell on the bed in a stupor, and the girl wasted no preliminaries in going after his money. But he wasn't quite out. Arousing himself, he sensed what was going on and grabbed for the girl, catching her by the arm. He was strong from his many years at sea and Torchy could not break his grip. Reaching for her trusty knife, she hacked at his chest and arms until he had no strength left and she was free. He was so badly slashed that he bled to death. Another candidate for the river!

When the mate was missed at his ship, his friends went out

looking for him. They descended on the Sewer in a group, investigating reports that he had been seen in the Pekin House, but nothing could be proved and they went back empty-handed.

But this was a little too much even for the Pekin House, and the redheaded cobra was bounced out. For two years she was the scourge of Gallatin Street. She went from bagnio to bagnio and got thrown out of one after another. The only reason she was able to get into other places was because she still had her beauty and made each brothel-keeper think that he was the one who could tame her. During this period she was known to have killed at least two more men, and she beat up or cut up a dozen others. Her nemesis appeared one evening in the person of a six-foot, red-shirted tobacco-chewing bruiser whom she tried to rob. He became infuriated, picked her up bodily, and threw her at the bar. She crashed into the mirror, bottles, and glasses, and was badly injured. When she recovered she was horribly disfigured. No longer beautiful, she was no longer in demand. All she had left was her body, which was still something if one did not have to see her scarred face along with it. Finally Mother Mame felt sorry for the girl and let her come to her place. There an occasional derelict accepted Torchy's services at a meager fee, barely enough to keep her alive. Mother Mame, an oldtime war-horse and battle-ax herself, with a career of mayhem and murder to her own credit, had taken pity on the once-proud harlot and had protected her. It seemed to "do something" for her, she said.

Several other joints stand distinguished in Sewer lore, such as the Blue Beacon, the Amsterdam, the Sailor's Rest, and the Bumble Bee Inn but the two worst, about which a whole book could be devoted, were the Port O'Call, on Gallatin just off Barracks Street, and the Brass Bell, near the corner of Governor Nicholls Street. Catering to the entire gamut of carnal pleasures, from women to dope, these two paragons of pollution made the greatest contribution to turpitude in the district. Both emporiums had a string of owners throughout the period during which they operated, the most frequent cause of change of ownership being the murder of the proprietor. Both offered about the same general kind and brand of merchandise: dancing, liquor, gambling, and women. Here, also was the headquarters of the

shanghai traffic. Ship-captains short of able bodies for a voyage knew that for so much a head they could get all the men they needed through the Port O'Call. True, they were no good for the first couple of days while they were recuperating from the effects of the chloral hydrate they had been served to subdue their opposition to the sea voyage, but once aboard they couldn't get off. Literally thousands of men were shanghaied from New Orleans and a good portion of them went via the Port O'Call.

In its heyday the Port O'Call was managed by a demi-monde named Flora Stone. Flora was a vivacious brunette, about five feet two, with a magnetic personality. Pert, well-formed, and able to wear clothes, she was so far above the rest of the Sewer sisters that one wondered what she was doing there. It was said that Flora could be had if there was money enough, but she was very selective. This in itself was enough to distinguish her on Gallatin Street. She could sing, and on special occasions she would entertain with a strip-tease to the ultimate, punctuated with provocative songs that could be inspired only in a bordello. She had a routine in which she impersonated a virgin being seduced by a satyr spicing her action with all the nuances, gestures, and motions that proved her a true artist in the profession she represented. Flora ran the Port O'Call with the help of a half-dozen bouncers. They were drilled to the obedience of a military unit and were armed as thoroughly, except that their weapons were blackjacks, brass knuckles, and belaying pins instead of guns. It was generally believed, and it was probably true, that Flora was backed by a politician whose influence and power went considerably beyond the local scene.

Flora had a worshipper in the person of Hook Cicone, a short, middle-aged, flea-bitten character who had earned his nickname from the vicious iron hook he wore in place of his right hand. He had lost his hand a few years before through an infection contracted from the bite of a bear he was fighting at a public exhibition. This metal hook was what made the little man big, and it was a matter of pride to Cicone to keep it filed to a sharp point. A mild and tractable man when sober, Hook's small weasel individuality was released when he got

Jackson Square on the site of the old Spanish prison or "calaboza." Once the head-
quarters of the Louisiana Legion, it now is part of the Louisiana State Museum

Gate to the courtyard of the Mercier Mansion. Typical of the many sturdy and attractive gates throughout the French Quarter.

drunk. He then felt that he could lick the world, and he often tried to. He appointed himself the savior and protector of Flora, swinging his evil, disease-bearing hook and threatening vengeance upon anyone who approached her. He became such a nuisance that he was frequently thrown out, but just as often he returned. The only reason he wasn't bashed in the head and tossed in the river was that for some reason Flora felt a compassion for him and would not permit him to be harmed. One night, Hook in his cups, became more obstreperous than usual and tried to take on the whole bouncer brigade. During the altercation he jumped up on the bar to get away from his assailants when they were closing in on him and he slipped on the smooth, wet surface. Down on the floor he went, throwing out his arms to break the fall. The needle-pointed hook struck the floor pointed upward, and an instant later the man's head impaled itself upon it, driving the point through his right eye, right into the brain. Another candidate for the river!

Flora made enough money on Gallatin Street to settle down while still in the prime of life. She took her savings, moved uptown, turned respectable, got herself a husband, and became a member of society. Occasionally there were whispers behind her back—but her past was never brought up to her face. Flora was one of the few who succeeded in raising herself.

In prostitution, as in every other line of endeavor, there are always top spots that fledglings can aspire to. Few reached the pinnacle that Flora did. In the Brass Bell, Celia Evans, a tall, taffy-haired, baby-faced wench, was an example of the direction most of the denizens of the nether world took. Born into an exclusive Philadelphia family, Celia was a problem child from the start. As a young girl, when she should have been interested in dolls, she had "crushes" on the servants, the delivery-boys, and gentlemen friends of the family. She had lost her maidenhood and started on a torrid sex career when she was twelve years old, at a birthday party given in honor of her older sister. Caught in the act by her mother with one of the attractive guests whom she had lured onto a sofa upstairs, she was hustled off to a private school, where she was such a despair to her teachers that they sent her home. She was enrolled in several other schools, but her antics always resulted in ex-

pulsion. In the last finishing-school she attended she was arrested for theft. By this time she had reached a point where her sex-craving could not be satisfied by the young men of her acquaintance, so she sought greener pastures elsewhere. She discovered that she could get paid for what she was anxious to give away, and in such quantities that she was delighted. So, having been disowned by her parents and forced to make her own living, she went into a Baltimore bordello.

Celia came to New Orleans in 1859 and served time in several Sewer slutteries, finally gravitating to the Brass Bell, which in addition to the regular red-light vices provided dope as a special attraction. Celia had been introduced to the pipe by one of her earlier lovers and had become an addict. When she reached New Orleans she was as far down as anyone could get, but she had an innocent baby-face that was as deceptive as it was false. With Gypsy Ferranza, a raven-haired, soft-skinned Latin, Celia made herself a star performer in the perverted sex demonstration known as the circus, adding a few fillips from her own fertile imagination. Except for Torchy Williams, Gypsy Ferranza was perhaps the toughest moll in Frenchtown at the time. Born on Girod Street, in a section that rated just a step higher than the Sewer, she had been raised on vice and crime, knowing little else. Gypsy was not much worse than Celia but whereas the blonde was stately, composed, and deliberate in her approach, the brunette was loud, brazen and direct. Celia crept up on you; Gypsy collided. When Celia had occasion to subdue a man to rob, she did it with subtlety aided by poison. Gypsy, on the other hand, being stronger than most men, was more direct. When she couldn't handle a mere man with her fists she took care of the situation with a gun or a slingshot. Gypsy once said, "They don't come too big, too hard, or too many for me!"—and lived up to it. She is said to have killed three men. She was careless in disposing of one of them, did not get the body out of the way soon enough, was convicted, and spent the balance of her life in the penitentiary.

Celia and Gypsy were good friends, or at least they were companions, consorting together until a man came between them. He was Yak Eye Stark, a hulking, bushy-browed brute

of an Irishman, who captivated Celia because, she said, he was the only man she ever knew who could really satisfy her. Love had come to the hard-boiled harridan. She went completely off-balance and wanted to take her man and get out of the racket. One night, when the business of the house had been particularly good, Celia and Yak Eye stole the receipts and ran off. In a couple of months even Yak Eye had gotten enough of a good thing, and he deserted Celia. She came back to the Brass Bell and asked for her old job back. Salvatore Marni, the proprietor, a swart, fat Levantine, welcomed her back and smilingly put her to work. She had barely started, however, when she collapsed from a drugged drink that had been served her. Down she went, to be seized by a couple of bruisers at the direction of the proprietor. They stripped her and threw her into the alley, where several of the Orientals who frequented the place pounced on her like jackals and ravished her. Her unclothed body was found five weeks later, with a silk stocking (then the badge of the prostitute) knotted tight around her neck, in one of Frenchtown's cisterns—a large water-tank alongside buildings that caught rain water for household use.

Nothing is low enough but what it has its champions and defenders. In support of seduction Celia tersely outlined her philosophy in a remark that has since become a classic bit of advice, "If rape is inevitable—relax and enjoy it!"

The worlds's worst characters came and went through the Sewer. There was Portugee Joe, a slimy, undersized rat who as a boy had choked his mother to death when she had caught him stealing and tried to correct him. In one of the lowest dives sat Wailing Mary, an old, overgrown slob who in her better days was said to have chopped off the genitals of her pimp as he lay drunk one night, because she suspected him of infidelity. Every time she got lit-up, which was whenever she could mooch enough liquor, the old hag bawled out in remorse over her vile act. A regular rounder of the Street was Bung Head Stover, a mountain of a man, who gave exhibitions in which he used his head to butt his adversaries. He claimed to be the world's champion "butter" and would take on man or beast. Crazy Joe Finas was an old, gaunt, grey-bearded man

who roamed the section, preaching religion and warning of eternal damnation. He could not have found a field that needed it more or wanted it less.

It's all over now, thank goodness! But while the people who brought life to the Sewer and the buildings that gave them cover are all gone, ghosts of the past still appear on Gallatin Street. Stroll down past the warehouses some clear night as the moon pokes its rim over the wharf-shed. Listen carefully!—You will hear a faint wail of a trumpet and the hardly perceptible tinkle of a piano. Perhaps a light will appear and then fade away, or the sweet, sickish smell of opium will greet your nostrils. A song drifts to the ear with a forgotten rhythm. That soundless black animal brushing against your leg is only a cat, one of the multitude of descendants of the old patriarch who sired and ruled all catdom from his exalted post in the Ursuline Convent.—Or is it?

Oh, yes! It's probably only your imagination—but you can't be sure.

Try it! Late at night. . . .

20

BARONESS PONTALBA

Turning and proceeding in an uptown direction on the right at number 921 Decatur Street over a grocery store is an oldtime hostelry known a century and a half ago as the HOTEL DE LA MARINE, or Naval Hotel. On the waterfront, convenient to the type of activity that would appeal to sea-faring men ashore, it was a popular rendezvous for adventurers from far distant parts. The scene of many "incidents" in its long history it lays its greatest claim for interest because in 1857 it was the scene of a mass slaying of dozens of Sicilians by the mass-aroused rabble "Know-Nothings," a political party whose basic appeal was "America for Americans." Its members went to extremes and fomented wide racial hatred which resulted in wholesale riots and bloodshed. They took their name from the fact that when asked any question about their party and its aim, they gave the stock answer, "I know nothing in our principles contrary to the Constitution."

Across the street, and extending along Decatur and North Peters Streets from St. Ann to Barracks Street, is the famous FRENCH MARKET. One of the cornerstones of New Orleans history and one of the city's chief attractions, it should be seen by every visitor. This so-important part of the life of any community can trace its existence from before the establishment of the colony. Tradition claims that this very spot was a Choctaw Indian trading-post before the arrival of the white man, and Bienville on his early exploration voyages in

1699 purchased supplies from the redskins and at that time selected the place for the capital of the colony. When Adrien de Pauger planned the original city in 1721 he laid it out around the Indian trading-post. For nearly two hundred years the Indians continued to appear here paddling from across the lake and bringing their baskets, wild herbs, meats, and sassafras leaves to trade with the settlers.

Early in the 1720's the Germans who had settled about thirty miles upstream on the "German Coast" began to float little boats down the river, loaded with vegetables, milk, butter, eggs, and cheese. They tied them up near the Indians and the products were welcomed by the settlers. In 1791 the first market building was erected by the Spaniards. It was replaced in 1813 by the present remodeled meat market, or "Halle des Boucheries." Several other buildings were added at later dates to provide a fish market, a fruit market, a vegetable market, and a bazaar. The fish market has become famous in itself for rare and tasty shrimps, oysters, and unusual fish. At the bazaar can be found curios such as huaraches, jewelry, perfumes, novelties, etc., from Mexico, South America, the Orient, and other foreign lands, which make splendid gifts and mementoes.

For a pleasant pause and a happy surprise one positively must visit the MORNING CALL, a unique establishment in the French Market, and partake of its very special offering, coffee and doughnuts. Yes, coffee and doughnuts! The coffee is different from that served anywhere else, and the doughnuts are of a most unusual shape, taste, and texture. Nothing but coffee and doughnuts is served here. You can have coffee two ways, however: café noir (black), or cafe au lait (with milk). White-capped and coated attendants pour from two giant long-spouted silver containers, one in each hand, with the skill of long experience. One contains the hot coffee and the other the hot milk. The Creoles have long preferred milk instead of cream in their coffee, and it must be served hot so that the coffee will not be cooled. An order includes a mug of coffee and three doughnuts, incredibly light and fluffy, arriving hot and made to your order. They are sprinkled with powdered sugar from giant tin shakers. The repast is served in a room with

An old Spanish fireplace in the ancient casa of Juan Mercier built before 1800

Le Petit Salon. Note the different designs in the balconies and the unusual iron-work on the first floor. A third balcony, not shown, has yet another design.

two rows of marble-topped counters backed up by mirrors. Another fine establishment providing the same services is the Café DuMond, a couple of blocks up Decatur Street.

Strolling on up Decatur Street you come to a corner establishment bearing a large vertical sign, "Tujaques." Noted today for its moderately-priced French food, this was formerly a nationally famous restaurant, MADAME BEGUE'S. Eighty or ninety years ago the elite of Frenchtown began to come to the spacious quarters upstairs dining-room in this building for breakfast. Servings started about eleven and continued until three in the afternoon. People came and leisurely stuffed themselves on the delectable dainties made by the skillful hands of the proprietress.

Madame Begué, despite her French cuisine, was German. A skillful cook, she came to America in 1853 and took a job in the kitchen of the restaurant and coffee-house that was then in this building. The proprietor died, and Hypolite Begué, who had been working for the French Market across the street, took the place over, married the cook, and changed the name of the place to Madame Begué's. It soon became known all over the country for its fine food. The famous of the world who visited New Orleans had to have breakfast at Madame Begué's.

Madame Begué died in 1906, and Monsieur followed her in 1917. The place is now operated by a former employee of the Begués who has changed the name and policy but has preserved the quality of its food. No menus are provided at Tujaque's and only one meal is available to diners—no choice—but it is always a tasty, full-course surprise. You go in, sit down, are given a serviette and silver, and then a bowl of the *soup du jour.* Next an appetizer, followed by a salad, perhaps, or a fish course. Wonderful French bread—practically the whole loaf—or rolls; then the main course, then this and that—a delectable dessert and, voila!—a demi-tasse.

A cup of coffee? Tsk, tsk, Monsieur! Cream? Mais, non! Sugar? Tsk, tsk, tsk!

The bill?—very moderate.

Glance up this short street running from Decatur to Chartres Street or, if you wish and have the time, stroll up a ways and back. It is one of the more pleasant streets of Frenchtown,

clean, modern, yet with the Old World style; and it is well worth while looking over. This is MADISON STREET. Not one of the original streets of the French Quarter, it was cut through in 1826 and was named in honor of President James Madison. A picturesque street, with over-hanging weeping-willow branches, it has recently had most of its buildings remodeled and the apartments are tenanted by writers, artists, and business people.

Returning to Chartres and still continuing uptown, at the corner of St. Ann Street you see the downtown building of the PONTALBA APARTMENTS. This and its counterpart on the other side of the square were the first apartment buildings in the United States. Commencing their second century of existence, these four-story buildings in the Renaissance tradition are attractive and modern in appearance. Wide balconies run the entire length of the second and third floors, enhanced by gorgeous ornate cast iron railings. In the center of every bay is a monogram of the letters "A" and "P" entwined, representing the joining of two famous old families—the Spanish Almonaster and the French Pontalba. These impressive edifices are named in honor of their builder, the Baroness Michaela Almonaster Pontalba, daughter of Don Andrès Almonaster y Roxas, the Andalusian nobleman who at his death was the richest man in the colony.

Michaela Almonaster was raised in luxury and with the care befitting her position as the heiress to the greatest fortune in the land. But before she finished her education in the Ursuline Convent she was married to the son of Baron Pontalba, in what was strictly a family arrangement. Both Michaela and her new husband were young, attractive, and exceedingly rich, and the marriage was the greatest social event that the colony had witnessed. Immediately after the ceremony the couple left New Orleans for Paris, where they were important members of society. After a few years of apparently harmonious domestic life, dissensions arose between them, ending in violent quarrels and finally a separation.

This separation was a severe blow to Baron Pontalba, a proud and distinguished aristocrat. In an attempt to effect a reconciliation he asked Michaela to visit him at his chateau. The

old nobleman had blamed the failure of his son's marriage entirely upon the daughter-in-law. When she arrived at the chateau Michaela was ushered into a spacious library, where the Baron awaited her. The door was closed and locked, and the servants returned to their duties. A half-hour later the sound of voices raised in anger was heard coming from the library. Then there was the loud report of a pistol, followed by a wild female shriek, then another pistol shot, and after that profound and ominous silence.

The servants rushed to the massive door of the library, but they could not budge it. Obtaining a bar and an ax, they forced it open. A ghastly spectacle was revealed. Within a few feet of each other lay the bleeding bodies of Madame Pontalba and the old man. It was obvious at a glance that the Baron was dead. In his hand he still clutched a pistol with which he had discharged a bullet into his head, scattering blood and brains over the fine Brussels carpet. Michaela still breathed, but she had a dangerous wound. A pistol-ball had entered her breast, passing through her hand which she had evidently raised to protect her heart, and severing one of her fingers. She lay in a pool of blood, moaning and gasping for breath. Doctors were rushed to the chateau and everything done for her which her wealth and the medical science of the time could command. After a long and lingering illness, Madame Pontalba recovered; but she would not reveal the causes and circumstances of the tragedy that had occurred in the library. It was generally believed that the Baron, obsessed by imagined wrongs and indignities heaped upon him by his daughter-in-law, and jealous of his family name, had demanded that Michaela return to his son. Michaela, with the blood-stock of hardy pioneers in her veins, was not a woman to yield to the will of others. She was self-reliant, domineering, and had an imperious temper. When the Baron saw that he could not prevail upon her to return to his son, he could not stand the disgrace. He shot her and then reloading the pistol, turned it upon himself.

Michaela inherited her father's abilities and was a shrewd and calculating businesswoman. By careful management she greatly increased her wealth both in France and in New Orleans. Alarmed by a socialistic political upheaval in France, she

came to New Orleans to look after her property there. Her father Don Almonaster had been successful in having deeded to himself the government properties on St. Ann and St. Peter Streets from Decatur to Chartres facing the Place d'Armes. When Michaela returned to New Orleans these two squares had nothing but a row of irregular Spanish houses, and it was then that she conceived the idea of beautifying the square and also her own property. She offered to improve it at her own expense, tear down the old Spanisn buildings along the square, and erect three or four-story buildings in their place, if the Council would exempt her property from taxes for a certain period of time. Her proposal was accepted and she faithfully fulfilled her promises. The square was improved and the buildings were erected as we see them today, the entire project costing the baroness nearly a million dollars. Upon completion of the buildings the Baroness moved into the apartment at 508 St. Peter Street. The forerunners of apartment houses as they are known today, the Pontalba Buildings were far in advance of their time, and the last word in luxurious living. With their beautiful iron work, gorgeous crystal chandeliers, curving stairways, marble fireplaces, and expensive plumbing, they were eagerly sought after as homes by the wealthy families of Frenchtown. After Louis Napoleon had restored some appearance of order to France Michaela returned to Paris, where she spent the rest of her life.

The Pontalba buildings had their ups and downs with the rise and fall of Frenchtown prosperity. In the beginning they were the homes of the elite of the South. But when hard times came to New Orleans the buildings were too expensive to rent and maintain, and they became badly run down. For a time they were largely inhabited by poor Italians, who destroyed many of the fine fittings, chandeliers, and mantlepieces. They are now government-owned. The building on St. Peter Street was bought by the City of New Orleans, and the one on St. Ann Street was purchased a few years ago by William Ratcliffe Irby, a wealthy philanthropist, who presented it to the State of Louisiana. One of the apartments near the center of the St. Ann Street building has been restored as a typical Creole home and is open to the public. In this same building, at the corner

Franklin's Tavern now occupied by the Little Theatre group. The courtyard behind this building is one of the most beautiful and best maintained in the French Quarter

Little Theatre courtyard scene.

Archway in the Little Theatre.

of St. Ann and Chartres Streets, is the Louisiana State Museum Library, where priceless records, books, and documents of early New Orleans and French Quarter history are available.

At the middle of the block is a good place to cross the street and enter JACKSON SQUARE through the St. Ann Street gate, which like the other entrances is guarded by massive iron lamp-posts, copied after the gas lamp-posts of earlier days.

Jackson Square is literally the front door of old New Orleans and of the entire central part of North America. Here is where Governor Bienville drew his sword in 1721 and, driving it into the ground, designated the spot as the place for the parade-ground, directly ahead of the location for the church. It is undoubtedly the most historic spot in Louisiana and one of the most famous in the entire country. Here is where the early settlers landed and entered the New World and this has been the scene of several changes of government. It has known stark tragedy and disaster, tense drama and intrigue—the tramping feet of soldiers and the strolling steps of countless lovers.

Under Bienville's direction the square was incorporated into the original plans of "Nouvelle Orléans" in 1721 by Adrien de Pauger. It was known in French Times as the Place d'Armes and by the Spanish as La Plaza de Armas. The park was given its present name of Jackson Square at the insistence of Baroness Pontalba as part of the agreement by which she provided funds for its improvement. It is seen today as she planned it over a hundred years ago—a Parisian park with curving walks and formal plantings. Michaela was an admirer and personal friend of the General who became President, and in addition to naming the park after him she provided the controversial statue of Jackson on horseback which stands in the center of the square by the flagstaff. In a national competition of sculptors to erect a statue of Jackson in Washington, Clark Mills, an artist who knew little of either sculpture or horsemanship, had his model accepted. Authorities laughed and said the model was an artistic monstrosity; that it was impractical and would not stand. It had the General on a rearing horse, front feet pawing the air, off-balance and with no support, and attached to the base only at the horse's hooves. How could such a heavy mass of bronze be made to stand on such a small area?

But the experts were wrong. The ten-ton bronze giant has been displayed for over a century, withstanding hurricanes, booming cannons, and rushing traffic, as rugged as the redoubtable Old Hickory himself. The inscription "The Union Must and Shall Be Preserved" was ordered cut into the granite base by Benjamin ("Silver Spoon") Butler, the Union General who occupied New Orleans during the Civil War.

Perhaps the first notable event after the square was laid out was the arrival in January 1721 of the sailing ship *Baleine*, which brought eighty-eight girls from La Salpetrière, a house of correction in Paris. These were the girls that worried Bienville. In those days the wharf was where Decatur Street is now, the river having filled in and moved back several hundred feet since then. This extra land formed by the vagaries of the great river is called "batture land," and its fill at this point was rather extensive. Six years later, in 1727, another class of girls began stepping off the wharf into the Place d'Armes. They were the famous casket girls, or *filles à la cassette*. Since immortalized in story and song, they continued to arrive at intervals until 1751, after which the forces of nature were able to carry on without this outside priming, providing sufficient females from the home stock for wives for the settlers. Some writers have commented upon the interesting phenomenon that none of the correction girls bore any children but the *filles à la cassette* were particularly fruitful. This is evidenced by the fact that while all of the old families of New Orleans claim direct descent from the casket girls, none claim any connection with the earlier arrivals from La Salpetrière. Something in the caskets, no doubt.

Often a scene of horror and violence, the Place d'Armes was the official place of punishment for the colony. In 1754 it saw two mutineer refugees punished for killing an officer by being spread-eagled on a wheel-like device, while their bones were broken one by one by a strapping black swinging a sledge-hammer. A third mutineer was nailed alive in a coffin which was then slowly sawed in two. Executions were public in early Frenchtown, and hangman's or execution day was a gala affair for which everyone turned out. Depending upon the decree of the court, the culprits met their end by hanging, beheading,

or shooting. Where an offense was so unusual that regular methods of execution were deemed inadequate and a more brutal method commensurate with the crime was indicated, the torture was limited only by the imagination and bestiality of the presiding magistrate. The chopping-block tended by a figure arrayed in a black hood to conceal his identity, stood just behind the pillories, which were lined up on a platform facing the Cabildo. Those sentenced to be shot were accomodated by a firing-squad near the center of the square, while the grim and forbidding gallows which snuffed out the sins of many a culprit stood about twenty feet ahead of where the statue of General Jackson is now.

The usual punishment for minor offenses and misdemeanors was whipping on the bare back, public labor in ball and chain, and exposure in the stocks or pillories, specimens of which can be seen today in the Cabildo museum. Offenders were locked into these devices of the devil in the early morning and kept there all day. Suspended from the neck of each prisoner was a large placard giving his name, offense, and sentence. This punishment was said to have been extremely effective, for the offenders were placed where people had to pass to get to markets and were the targets of abuse, missiles, and jeers from the passers-by. A serious offense of the time was the violation of the ordinance against greasing wagon-axles. This law was passed to prevent or hamper smuggling operations at night. A silent wagon or cart was looked upon with suspicion; and if investigation revealed that the axles had been greased to stop them from squeaking and thus to prevent giving warning of its presence, its owner went to the stocks for an indefinite period. The practice of confining people to stocks was abolished for whites shortly after the American occupation, but it continued for Negroes until as late as 1847.

Barbaric though these punishments seem today, they had to be severe to make an impression upon and control the rough, hard-bitten ex-galley slaves and adventurers who were dumped out of European prisons to be gotten rid of and who gravitated to the colonies.

In 1766 the vanguard of a series of vital historic events appeared in the person of Don Antonio de Ulloa, the Spanish

Governor, who presumably came to the Place d'Armes to receive Louisiana from France in accordance with the Treaty of Fontainebleau of 1762. Two years later the colonists were called to a mass meeting here by Lafreniere, Marquis, Milhet, and other leaders of the revolution after their followers had stormed and taken over the city. This was eight years before the Declaration of Independence, and had the uprising been successful the entire history of our country would have been considerably different.

A year later on August 15, 1769, the fleet of twenty-four Spanish men-of-war, and supply ships commanded by General Alejandro O'Reilly arrived and anchored off the Place d'Armes. Within the next few days O'Reilly took over the colony and the Place d'Armes became La Plaza de Armas.

Slaves just did not murder their masters in Frenchtown, no matter how brutal the owners were. That was something that wasn't done. Occasionally a daring black, perhaps tortured beyond his capacity to endure, tried it; but the practice was most severely frowned upon. Five slaves found this out in June 1771 after they had indulged in the pastime of master-murder. Unzaga, the Spanish Governor, personally signed the following sentence:

"Mirliton and Temba are sentenced to death by strangulation. They are to be brought out from the prison and dragged through the streets in back of a pack horse; each is to have an esparto halter around his neck, feet, and hands. The town crier is to go before, announcing the crime that the slaves have committed. They must be dragged through the accustomed streets to the gallows in the square, where they will be hanged until dead. At the foot of the gallows Temba's hands and feet are to be cut off; after his death his body must remain hanging from the gibbet; his hands and feet are to be nailed on posts upon the public road until they are consumed by the birds and elements. No one is to take down the bodies under pain of death.

"Pedro is to receive two hundred and Marianne one hundred lashes at the foot of the gallows (while Mirliton and Temba are hanging there), and their ears are to be cut off close. Carlos is to be tarred and feathered and exposed in the streets on

Sash-hinged windows leading to the courtyard of the Little Theatre. The Spanish-style windows are typical of those found throughout Frenchtown.

Brick and plaster archway entrance to the courtyard of the Raigur Haveli.

the back of a pack beast."

Ten years later, in 1781, "a negress, Molly Glass, was executed for the murder of a young girl. Her hand was chopped off at the foot of the gallows, then she was hanged and her head severed from her body and placed on a pole at her former residence."

It seems hardly adequate. . . .

In 1788 the public square was converted into a refugee camp for the victims of the fire, and again in 1794 when the second fire undid the work of the preceding six years. Two years later, in 1796, the Square was lighted with the first oil lamps, tended by watchmen called *serenos*. The *serenos* made regular trips through Frenchtown calling the time of night, the condition of the weather, and the general state of affairs.

On November 30, 1803, Pierre Clément de Laussat, Prefect and Commissioner of France, received the province of Louisiana from the Spanish Governor on behalf of Napoleon Bonaparte, raising the French tri-color on the flagpole in the public square, and Louisiana was back under France again. But not for long. Twenty days later, on December 20, 1803, the Territory was transferred to the United States in the presence of Governor William C. C. Claiborne and General James C. Wilkinson, representing President Thomas Jefferson. The flag of France came down for the last time in the Place d'Armes. By this transfer the United States was doubled in size and well started on the road to becoming a leading world power.

In the following years many other important events took place in the Place d'Armes. In 1812 the people collected to celebrate the admission of the Territory of Orleans as the eighteenth State of the Union. Three years later Jackson, the hero of New Orleans, was feted in the square that later was to bear his name. The old oil lamps were converted to gas, and a year later the Place d'Armes again honored another famous man, the immortal French patriot, the Marquis de Lafayette. Mass meetings by the score followed, from Mardi Gras masked affairs to appeals for revolutionary aid to Texas, Mexico, and the South American countries. In 1850 the Pontalba buildings were completed and the square was redesigned and modernized as it appears today. A year later the name was changed to its

present and appropriately American one of Jackson Square.

There followed a rather lengthy period of political upheavals, centering in the square, before things settled down and permitted Frenchtown actually to become America, U. S. A. Revolt and turmoil were still in the air, a part of the New Orleans structure. From June 2 to 7, 1858, Captain James K. Duncan, commander of the Vigilantes, occupied the government buildings and armed the Square in an attempt to enforce honest elections and curb vice in New Orleans. (Some ambition!) In 1861 two new flags were unfurled in Jackson Square, the national flag of Louisiana—indicating secession from the Union—and the Confederate Stars and Bars. Again, not for long. The flag of the United States was restored to its rightful place two years later by Admiral Farragut, whose family came from Louisiana. Violence flared again in Jackson Square during the Battle of the Cabildo, when the citizen soldiers of the Crescent White League forces under General R. N. Ogden undertook to seize the Cabildo and the Arsenal. The Square was mobilized and filled with horses and supplies as a base of operations for the Metropolitan Police under General A. S. Badger, supporting the carpetbag Governor Kellogg. Engagements took place at the foot of Canal Street and at various places in the French Quarter. The White League was victorious, captured the Cabildo and Jackson Square, and ousted the scalawag carpetbag regime. This ended the tragic misrule of the Reconstruction period, culminating twenty years of political turmoil.

Electric lights came to Jackson Square and Frenchtown in 1884, and it settled down to long years of peace and quiet, the most notable later events being the visits of Presidents McKinley in 1901, Franklin D. Roosevelt in recent years, and Dwight D. Eisenhower at the Sesqui-centennial of the Louisiana Purchase in 1953.

It has been a busy place, but you would never realize it to look at it today in all its tranquillity and serenity.

Near the St. Ann Street gate is an old one-man submarine, said to be the first one built in the United States and used by the Confederates in the Civil War. About twenty feet long and eight feet high, it was recently found and placed on display.

Jackson Square is said to have specimens of every type of flora found in Louisiana. In the proper season the park bursts into bloom with magnolias (the State flower), oleanders (the City flower), and camellias, crape myrtles, varicolored roses of Sharon, scarlet hibiscus, and azaleas. One finds the stalwart live oak, the wispy parkinsonia, bamboo, sugar cane, mulberry, banana and date, whose fruit does not ripen in New Orleans, and dozens of others. There is always some kind of flower or tree in bloom in Jackson Square the year around.

A pleasant and unforgettable sound to be heard in Jackson Square and in the heart of Frenchtown is the striking of the Cathedral clock. No one thing in New Orleans adds more to the spell of Old Worldliness than does this quarter-hourly reminder of the passing of time. Faint, hesitant, almost apologetic, with the most unusual timbre, the chime has a charm found nowhere else. Visitors intrigued by the fascinating tone, wait just to hear the sound again and again. This clock was formerly illuminated by gas and in the old days was visible in Algiers, across the river.

Just outside the gate on the Decatur Street side of Jackson Square is the spot of the GIUSEPPE ESPOSITO CAPTURE, on July 5, 1881. His arrest by the Hennesseys and two New York detectives touched off a series of Mafia activities not only in New Orleans but throughout the country and nearly precipitated the United States into a war with Italy.

21

HEART OF FRENCHTOWN

Strolling through the Chartres Street gates one is faced with the three main early government buildings, the Presbytère on the right, the St. Louis Cathedral in the center, and the Cabildo on the left.

The PRESBYTERE was originally used as a Capuchin monastery and was known by the Spanish term *Casa Curial*, or a house for ecclesiastical purposes. Construction was started in 1792 but was delayed until the buildings on the other side of the Cathedral that had been destroyed by the great fires could be replaced. A duplicate of the Cabildo, the Presbytère is now owned by the State of Louisiana and is the Natural Science Division of the Louisiana State Museum.

It has a splendid exhibition of the flora and fauna of Louisiana, products of the State, and specimens of the geology of the surrounding territory. One of its treasured items is an original of John James Audubon's *Birds of America*, the prodigious undertaking which was largely painted in Frenchtown while Audubon lived at 505 Dauphine Street.

Next door to the Presbytère, in the center of the block facing Jackson Square and the river, is one of the foremost shrines of America and the oldest cathedral in the United States, the ST. LOUIS CATHEDRAL. One can hardly pass this stately old temple without a feeling of awe and insignificance. It is impossible not to feel the peaceful repose and strange stillness that pervades the atmosphere around this revered and venerable

old church. Not particularly large or pretentious, as we are inclined to think of Old World cathedrals, the St. Louis Cathedral has a dignity and character all its own.

As it is seen today, the St. Louis Cathedral is actually the third church to have been on this site. The original church was one of the first four buildings constructed by Bienville in 1718. It was built of crude logs, mud, and palmetto. Known as the Church of St. Louis, named after the patron saint of the House of Bourbon, the rulers of France, it was destroyed by a hurricane on September 11, 1723, along with most of the other buildings erected by the colonists.

When the houses destroyed by the storm were rebuilt, a second Church of St. Louis was erected. Completed in 1727, it was a rather imposing structure for the time and place, having walls of stuccoed brick and reinforced by heavy timbers. It had a belfry, an organ, and entrances on both sides as well as the main opening on the Place d'Armes. It became the center of colonial life, where all baptisms, marriages, and funerals took place, until that memorable Good Friday of March 21, 1788, when it was destroyed in that first great fire that wiped out practically the whole of Frenchtown.

So great were the damage and fire loss that the citizens were unable to rebuild immediately. Don Andrès Almonaster, the Spaniard who had come to the country shortly after O'Reilly as a penniless notary and had made a vast fortune, offered to provide funds for rebuilding the church and government buildings. The offer was gratefully accepted, but it seems there were certain conditions attached to his generosity. After considerable delay and dickering with the government officials, an agreement was reached, and Almonaster emerged with the title of Alcalde, or judge, and with various other tributes. The church was rebuilt at a reputed cost to Don Andrès of approximately $50,000. Construction was started in 1792 and the building was completed two years later. It was finished but not yet opened to the public when the second fire struck on December 8, 1794. Although the government building next to it was consumed the church miraculously escaped.

When Almonaster died, in April 1798, he was first interred in the parish cemetery. About two years later his remains were

removed to the Cathedral and placed under a large slab beneath the altar. On the slab are inscribed his name, his coat of arms, and a brief account of his life.

The church as rebuilt in 1794 had no central spire, but on each corner of the facade was an octagonal tower. In 1814 the two side towers were crowned with low spires, and ten years later a belfry which was used as a fire tower was added between the spires. Further reconstruction and enlargements were undertaken in 1849, and while this was going on the central tower fell and the present lofty spire was put up in its place. Some changes were also made in the general appearance of the front of the building, but generally speaking, with the exception of the improvements made over the years the St. Louis Cathedral as it is today is the church built under the personal supervision of and with the money provided by Don Andrès Almonaster y Roxas.

Prior to the time the church was rebuilt in 1794 its parish was under the diocese of Havana, but while the church was under construction in 1793 Louisiana and the Floridas were formed into a separate diocese. On Christmas Eve 1794, with the ravages of the recent fire all around it, the new church was dedicated as the Catedral de San Luis. This ceremony, the first in the United States to raise a church to cathedral rank, occurring as it did only three weeks after the second fire, served as an inspiration to the discouraged people who had so recently been twice plagued by destruction. The rector at the time and until his death in 1829 was the controversial but respected priest Padre Francisco Antonio Ildefonso Moreno y Arze de Sedella, later known as Père Antoine.

The interior of the Cathedral is ornamented with beautiful fresco paintings by the artist Casanova, whose works are masterpieces. In 1873 Erasme Humbrecht added new murals that were more in keeping with the times and retouched others that had become faded with age. These paintings cover practically all of the wall and ceiling surfaces and should be seen by all visitors to the French Quarter. The church is open to the public for visiting and for worship. Guides are available to answer questions and to tell the intriguing facts and story about this fascinating St. Louis Cathedral.

Old lamp in arches leading to the Bosque courtyard.

The Perfect Stairway. The work of an unknown and forgotten designer. It is an inspiration to modern architects and artists.

On the uptown side of the Cathedral, and separated from it only by the narrow Pirate's Alley, is the CABILDO, the twin of the Presbytère, on the downtown side of the Cathedral. It is difficult to consider any one of the buildings around the old square separately or without the park itself. Being the geographic and the governmental center of the community, this group of buildings and this town square were the pivot of life, the heart of the country, founded, developing, and maturing together. Each had its own function and made its own contribution to the over-all welfare of the community. There is not a structure standing today upon the American continent, which offers more historical interest than this edifice of stuccoed brick. On this original site the French built their town meeting house which the Spanish replaced with an administration building in 1770. This was totally destroyed by the first fire in 1788. The temporary structure built in its place was consumed in the second fire in 1794. Fortunately most of the records and official documents destroyed in these fires were duplicated in the capitals of Spain and France from the reports of the various Governors. Vital historical information is therefore still available about the early days before the destruction of the government buildings.

The Cabildo gets its name from the Spanish legislative body known as the Very Illustrious Cabildo which, together with the Governor, met in this building and administered the affairs of the colony. Calling this building the Cabildo is the same as if the Capitol at Washington were called the "Congress." Its more proper name is the Casa Capitular, or Capitol House, and in the old days it was also referred to as El Principal.

Governor Carondelet in 1794 was in a sad way, burned out, with no government buildings, no city, and no money. With the approval of the Very Illustrious Cabildo he arranged to borrow enough from Don Almonaster to construct a Capitol building, and then he contracted with the Don to erect it. Thus Almonaster provided the money, designed the building, and then built it. Don Almonaster consequently is responsible for almost the entire area around Jackson Square. This section is a monument to the man. True, the records show that he was well repaid, but he has left something that has benefitted

mankind and which might not have been possible without his help.

Originally the Cabildo as well as the Presbytère was a strong, flat, two-story building with a pediment above the central entrance. It was a splendid example of Spanish-Moorish architecture. For some reason the present mansard roof and cupola were added to both the Cabildo and the Presbytère in 1847. This destroyed the harmonious lines and converted two beautifully designed buildings into architectural hybrids. The cupola of the Presbytère was blown off in a hurricane and has never been replaced.

The famous architect Latrobe, writing in 1820, revealed an interesting bit of information about the construction of the Cabildo and the Presbytère. He said:

"The construction of these buildings is curious. The foundations are laid about six inches below the natural surface, that is, the turf is shaved off, and logs then being laid level along the shallow trench, very solid piers and thick walls of brick are immediately built upon the logs."

Considering that this appears to be a relatively inadequate foundation for such structures, and that the ground upon which these buildings were erected is merely the soft, marshy alluvium of the Mississippi River, it is remarkable that the buildings have stood through all the years of their existence without collapse or at least considerable settling. It is a tribute also to the durability of the logs used in laying the foundations, which were undoubtedly cypress from the nearby swamps.

In this very building the official acts and ceremonies took place that transferred the entire Louisiana Territory from Spain to France in 1803, and, twenty days later to the United States. The actual transfers took place in the main room on the second floor, known then as now as the Sala Capitular. This is one of most historic rooms in the the United States. Under the American regime the Cabildo has been Territorial Capitol, State Capitol, City Hall, and Supreme Court, and today it is the Louisiana State Museum.

Admission to the Museum is free, and every visitor to New Orleans should spend some time there. It offers a remarkable display of historical documents, relics, portraits, trophies,

Ironwork on the 600 block of Toulouse Street.

Courtyard where Governor Clinton is said to have lived. Now occupied by Eastern artists.

specimens, furniture, costumes, and mementoes of all kinds. Of particular interest are the relics of the Baratarian pirates Jean and Pierre Lafitte. On the first floor is the prison cell in which Pierre was confined when he was held by Governor Claiborne. In the cell are knives and swords used by the pirates together with other items, such as powder-horns, spyglasses, whiskey bottles, and compasses, which were necessary to the smuggler profession. Specimens of the inhuman pillories and other methods of controlling crime and subjugating slaves can also be seen. One of the most interesting exhibits is the death mask of Napoleon Boñaparte, made by Dr. Antommarchi, the Emperor's personal physician. The bronze cast of the exiled conqueror rests on imperial red velvet in a glass-enclosed case on the second floor of the Cabildo. If there were no displays of any kind it would be well worth-while to go through this old structure, just to associate briefly with events that happened in the past and to feel the spirit that pervades it.

Adjoining the Cabildo in the rear, on St. Peter Street, is the OLD STATE ARSENAL. The present building, finished in 1839, became the headquarters of the Louisiana Legion, forerunner of the State National Guard. An aristocratic military organization, its membership was drawn from the prominent old Creole families. The center of the early military history of the South, it was turned over to the Louisiana State Museum at the centennial celebration in 1915 and it is now known as the Battle Abbey. Relics of the military activities of the colony from early days to the present time are on display inside.

The ground occupied by the Battle Abbey is the partial site of the first prison in Frenchtown, a fortress-like Spanish dungeon known as the Calabozo. A new parish prison was built in 1834, just outside the limits of the French Quarter, and the old Spanish Calabozo was torn down. That was when the mysterious rooms and hidden passages were discovered containing evil devices for human torture, said to have been the relics of the Inquisition.

On St. Peter Street, a short distance from the Battle Abbey, is the scene of the VIGILANTE SLAUGHTER of 1858. During the insurrection, when the Vigilantes led by Captain Duncan were ensconced in the Arsenal and the Cabildo, fourteen men

were shot on St. Peter Street between the Arsenal and Royal Street. A warning had come to the Vigilantes that the opposing group intended to attack, and every man had been alerted. When a patrol was sighted turning off Royal Street it was challenged, but the response was not satisfactory and the men were fired upon. Before the defenders discovered that the unit was a part of their own forces returning from patrol five men were dead and nine more seriously wounded.

Life was cheap in early Frenchtown!

Across the street, at 650 St. Peter Street, is another old building dating back to the Spanish regime known as the MERCIER MANSION. Now occupied by the Green Orchid, one of the distinctive gift shops of the Old Square, it boasts of a quaint old fireplace in a unique Spanish kitchen just off the courtyard. The building itself is worthy of interest because of its antiquity, but the fireplace is an object of beauty and deserves special attention.

In 1925 a group of prominent women of New Orleans, headed by Grace King, famous author and historian, formed an exclusive organization for the preservation of the culture, traditions, and atmosphere of the French Quarter. They purchased a fine old Creole residence at 620 St. Peter Street which had been built in 1838 by Victor David, a wealthy merchant, made it their meeting-place, and named it LE PETIT SALON. The building is particularly noteworthy for its iron work on three balconies, on the stairway, and on the ground floor. The designs of the three balcony railings are all different.

At 616 St. Peter Street is the LITTLE THEATRE, the result of the efforts of another group of civic-minded people who have banded together in a common interest to keep alive the cultural and dramatic traditions of the Creole Quarter. This group, officially known as Le Petit Théatre du Vieux Carré, is the outgrowth of an earlier group called the Drawing Room Players, who gave dramatic performances in the houses of its members. So great was the interest aroused that a permanent location became necessary, and this property was purchased in 1922 and remodeled after the Old Absinthe House on Bourbon Street. In the spacious new quarters full-length plays are given throughout the winter season, and the movement has

become one of the more important cultural functions of New Orleans. The building itself, with its broad doors, Spanish arch windows, and solid shutters, has become one of the chief attractions of the Old Quarter. The courtyard inside is perhaps the finest in Frenchtown. It is an excellent piece of restoration, beautifully landscaped and maintained in perfect order. Usually open to visitors, the courtyard is a favorite spot for artists and photographers.

On the uptown woods corner of St. Peter and Chartres Streets is a Moorish building which is the subject of numerous legends and considerable controversy as to the time of its origin and its early use. Best known as PONTALBA'S TAVERNE, it is frequently pointed out as the residence of the Spanish Governors; but this is claimed to be in error by Judge Henry C. Castellanos, who states that it was a restaurant and lodging-house of the highest order, catering to the cream of the elite. It was once owned by Baron Pontalba and is now a part of the Little Theatre. On its balcony is one of the finest examples of wrought iron to be found in Frenchtown.

22

AU REVOIR!

Turning up Chartres Street, at 617 is another fine old Spanish residence, known as the BOSQUE HOME. It was built in 1795 by Bartolomé Bosque, a Spanish grandee, who became a successful merchant in the early trade of the colony. The wrought iron railing is a fine example of scrollwork, but it may be noted that the initials "BB" are backwards when viewed from the street.

Suzette Bosque, the daughter of Bartolomé and said to have been the most beautiful and fascinating woman in New Orleans at the time, became the third wife of William C. C. Claiborne, the first Governor of Louisiana for the United States. When Claiborne died she married Colonel John R. Grymes, the erratic but brilliant lawyer who defended the Lafittes in their numerous skirmishes with the law. This is the same Colonel Grymes who lost half a million dollars gambling at the Davis Gambling Salon on Orleans Street.

Across the street, at 614 Chartres, near the corner of Wilkinson Street, is an old building with a narrow passage that leads to a courtyard in the rear known as the COURTYARD OF THE VINE. This is distinguished because of a mammoth purple wisteria vine that is now nearly a hundred years old. It seems unbelievable until the vine is seen in bloom, a colossal expanse of purple beauty springing from an enormous trunk, with many branches forming a network of growth. Wires have been strung across the patio to support the heavy branches.

Around the corner of Toulouse Street, to the right, in the house numbered 623, is an architechtural wonder known as the PERFECT STAIRWAY. This is a stairway with a railing and steps built in a perfect spiral, the "S" curve of beauty. A curving stairway is acknowledged by architects and artists to be one of the most difficult of constructive accomplishments, and this is believed to be an example of near perfection. The finishing touch of balance is the Spanish-fan window seat about two-thirds of the way between the first and second floors.

Across the street, at 628 Toulouse, is a fine old building, now a little the worse for wear, said to be the RESIDENCE OF GOVERNOR CLAIBORNE. It was built as a town house by a wealthy planter shortly after the Louisiana Purchase and supposedly rented to the new Governor, although this is disputed by certain writers. Lately it has become a center for some of the leading artists of the French Quarter, among them the celebrated architect and etcher, Morris Henry Hobbs, who has his southern studio on the second floor.

On the uptown river corner of Chartres and Toulouse Streets is the site of the former NUNEZ RESIDENCE, where the first disastrous fire of Frenchtown started. The building, occupied at the time by Don Vicente José Nunez the paymaster of the Spanish Army, was said to have been built by Governor Ulloa as a gift to his Peruvian bride. On Good Friday, March 21, 1788, while the family was at church, the wind blew the window-curtains across the lighted tapers in the little chapel where the Marchioness de Abrado worshipped in private a few years previously. In an instant the room was ablaze. It spread to the rest of the house in a matter of minutes and, fed by a strong wind, became an inferno that set off nearby buildings. A message was rushed to the church, but historians tell us that because it was a holy day the priests would not permit the warning-bells to be rung. By the time the fire was brought under control practically the entire city had been destroyed, including 856 houses, the Casa Capitular (Capitol), the St. Louis Church, the Capuchin Monastery, the public jail and other buildings.

Governor Miro, in a lengthy and complete report to the King of Spain, wrote, "If the imagination could describe what our

senses enable us to feel from sight and touch, reason itself would recoil in horror, and it is no easy matter to say whether the sight of an entire city in flames was more horrible to behold than the suffering and pitiable condition in which every one was involved.—The obscurity of the night coming on threw its mantle for awhile over the saddening spectacle; but more horrible still was the sight, when day began to dawn, of entire families pouring forth into the public highways yielding to their lamentations and despair, who, but a few hours before, had been basking in the enjoyment of more than the ordinary comforts of life. The tears, the heart-breaking sobs and pallid faces of these wretched people mirrored the dire fatality that had overcome a city, now in ruins, transformed within the space of five hours into an arid and fearful desert. Such was the sad ending of a work of death, the result of seventy years of industry."

On the downtown river corner of Chartres and St. Louis Streets is an imposing stuccoed brick building, long famous in New Orleans as the NAPOLEON HOUSE. It was here that Nicolas Girod, first mayor of New Orleans and a steadfast admirer of Napoleon, prepared the sumptuous sanctuary for the Corsican General and planned the expedition that was to have liberated the Emperor from the island of St. Helena.

It is here also that, after the death of Napoleon, his physician, Dr. Antommarchi opened up a clinic where he gave medical attention to the poor without charge. This was at the same time that he treated the rich of Frenchtown from his main and more pretentious office at 121 Rue Royale.

Some guide books place the location of Napoleon's "refuge" in the house at 514 Chartres Street but the best evidence does not support this contention.

Adjoining the Girod home in the rear on St. Louis Street is an old Spanish building that has long been the object of admiration by architects and builders. Frequently called the LAFITTE BANK, it is supposed to have once been a financial house owned by the pirate Lafitte. While there is no proof, this does not mean that it could not have been, for Monsieur Lafitte was extremely careful not to encumber himself with any incriminating or binding connections. A basic requirement

Attractive St. Louis Street Building next door to the Lafitte Bank.

[illegible] part of a plot to rescue the Emperor from the island of St. Helena.

[illegible] and center of intrigue in the New World.

of his profession was flexibility and mobility. Always careful to do business through an intermediary, the formidable adventurer insured honesty in those he was forced to trust by the keenness and speed of his cutlass rather than by written document. So the oft-repeated report that this was Lafitte's Bank could have been true.

Across the street, on the uptown river corner of St. Louis and Chartres Streets, is an old building which for downright drama cannot be surpassed by any of the historical spots in Frenchtown. This is the celebrated and world-famous La Bourse de Maspero, or, as it is now affectionately called, MASPERO'S EXCHANGE. The present building was erected on the warm ashes of an earlier structure that was destroyed in the fire of 1788, its present well-preserved appearance disputing its authenticated age of nearly a century and three quarters.

This definitely was the center of operations for Jean and Pierre Lafitte, who transacted their business with supposedly reputable merchants of New Orleans in the rooms on the second floor of the building. Many an off-color scheme was hatched here that had its results in pillage on the high seas and sunken ships and capture of entire settlements on the African Coast. When, in 1814, the hot breath of Britain could be felt on the outskirts of New Orleans a group of citizens formed a Committee of Public Safety, and its members selected this building as its headquarters. When General Andrew Jackson arrived in the city to plan its defense he met here with that committee. Of several places that lay claim to being the location where Jackson accepted the offer of Lafitte and his Baratarians to join the Americans, Maspero's Exchange is the most likely. Jackson is known to have frequented the place, and the planning of the Battle of New Orleans was no small detail. It was here also that a thousand dollars was collected from a crowd in the streets when Jackson was fined that amount by Judge Hall, who claimed that the hero of New Orleans had shown contempt of court in placing the city under martial law.

Prior to the Civil War this exchange was the city's most popular auction-mart, where slaves, stocks, real estate, and all kinds of property were sold every day from noon until three o'clock. It was operated by a well-known sporting man named

Hewlett, and as Hewlett's Exchange, it was the most popular meeting-place in Frenchtown. The entire upper part of the building was given over to gambling-rooms for the exclusive use of Hewlett's more affluent guests and patrons. In its time it was the most famous gambling-spot of the country. Here met, judge, general, merchant, planter, buccaneer, and filibusterer to plan their campaigns and promote their personal interests. The finest slaves were sold here, and the richest cargoes and choicest crops changed hands. It was the scene of many a brawl and killing in the excitement of a too closely contested deal, and the locale of many a suicide by some unfortunate who guessed wrong on the turn of a card or the whim of business fortune, lost his all, and had nothing left to live for. Carried on by Pierre Maspero, from whom it gets its present name, the Exchange lost none of its color and drama.

The old Maspero's Exchange is quiet today, in restful contrast to its hectic earlier days. It is now a fine, quiet, drinking establishment of the best kind. Its proprietor claims that he serves not only the best but the only true Pousse-café in New Orleans. This is a unique drink served in a thin, narrow glass made up of perhaps ten cordials and liqueurs in distinct layers. A steady hand and a thorough knowledge of liqueurs is necessary, and a definite color-sequence is required to make the real pousse-café. The trick in keeping the various layers separate lies not only in having a steady hand to pour but in the knowledge of the specific gravities of the various cordials. One mistake, or an unsteady hand, and the whole thing runs together and the whole effect is lost.

Try one!

On this pleasant note, and in the happy atmosphere of such a delightful spot, we regretfully take our leave of Frenchtown and its early trials, loves, tragedies, and accomplishments.

There is a saying in New Orleans that if you once visit the city and leave—you will return. This is absolutely true, and there is nothing you can do about it. We'll be waiting for you.

Au revoir!

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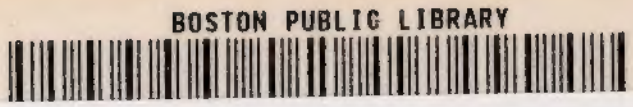

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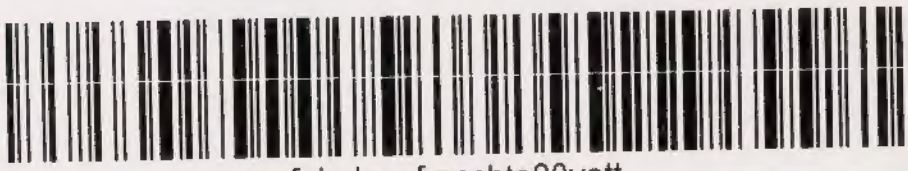

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